WHAT SHALL BE, SHALL BE.

A NOVEL.

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WHAT SHALL BE, SHALL BE.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. MEEKE,

AUTHOR OF THE

VEILED PROTECTRESS; OLD WIFE AND YOUNG HUSBAND; THERE IS A SECRET! FIND IT OUT; WHICH IS THE MAN? THE SPANISH CAMPAIGN, &c.

Who is it, that will doubt
The care of Heaven; or think immortal
Pow'rs are slow, 'cause they take the privilege
To choose their own time, when they will send their
Blessings down? DAVENANT.

VOL. I.

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WHAT SHALL BE, SHALL BE.

CHAPTER I.

"YOU are the most awkward fellow breathing," exclaimed sir Charles Freeman, in an angry tone—"you handle my foot as if it was a log of wood."

"Indeed, sir, I was not aware that I hurt you."

"Then you must think me quite devoid of feeling," replied the impatient baronet, who was smarting under a very severe fit of the gout; "there, remove the stool farther back. I cannot think why I suffered myself to be persuaded to leave my bed.

bed. That will do—lay the other flannel gently over my feet."

While the valet was obeying his orders, a carriage was heard to stop at the door, and the next moment the knocker announced a visitor.

The baronet started, surprise and a twinge of his complaint co-operating, exclaiming—"This city of Bath is more noisy than London in the spring; and I am more annoyed by visitors here than ever I was there. But I will not be disturbed—run down this moment—say I am too ill to see any body—in bed—any thing, for I will not receive company."

The man was out of hearing before he had brought his harangue to a conclusion; as he did not return so soon as his master expected, he called out, the moment he opened the door—"Who was it?"

"A gentleman, sir, who will take no denial. I have left him in the parlour while I came to tell you his name is Murray, and that he has not been in England

more than eight-and-forty hours. If he did not look so old, I should judge he was your nephew."

"*You* should judge—as if his name was not proof positive. Shew him up this moment, you stupid hound! I did not expect him this month."

The mortified valet slowly opened the door, at which stood the visitor, who felt so certain of being a welcome guest, that he was within a pace of the invalid's arm-chair in another second, and caught his extended hands, while he welcomed him most cordially to Bath, merely regretting that he could not give him the meeting—"But here I am a complete fixture, except it be deemed moving, to be wheeled out of one room into another. Set a chair, Wilson, and leave the room."

Colonel Murray had silently returned the cordial pressure of his uncle's hands, being, for a few minutes, too much agitated to make any other reply, since he

was not prepared for the very great alteration which fourteen years had made in his much-esteemed relative; but soon rallying his spirits, he made a suitable return to the baronet's kind greetings, regretting his confinement, but adding—"The gout, you know, sir, is the preservative from all other complaints."

"So they say, Charles, and so it ought; but, positively, the rouse your unexpected arrival has given me has done me good; so now tell me how you do? I am afraid India has not agreed with you—it is a vile climate."

"We Europeans seldom bring home excellent constitutions, whatever we may do in point of fortune; but I expect to receive great benefit from my native air." When, as if to change the subject, he related how he had learned, almost immediately upon landing, that his uncle was at Bath, which had induced him to proceed thither, instead of going direct to

London,

London, though he had business to transact at the India House, which would, of necessity, shorten his present stay at Bath.

"That I suppose—but you must return as soon as possible, since I do hope, as my nearest relative and heir, that you will not leave me wholly to the care of servants, who are the plague of my life."

The colonel's reply met his approbation.

"I believe you, Charles; but now tell me sincerely, have you really returned home sooner than you intended, to put the finishing stroke to your romance of real life?"

"How far I may have been actuated by romance it must remain for you to decide, sir, since I acknowledge my wish to fulfil the last request of my deceased Emily did hasten my return to England, which the state of my health certainly rendered necessary; to that plea I am indebted for my leave of absence—whether I shall ever return remains in doubt."

"I shall put my veto upon your doing

 so;

so; but I did hope you had, ere this, suffered judgment to take the lead of imagination."

"Well, but surely, my dear sir, it behoves me to endeavour to discover what is become of the unfortunate child, whom I was openly accused of having (not to mince the matter) kidnapped, admitting I had not pledged my word to do so to the angel I have lost."

A short silence ensued, the baronet participating in the colonel's visible emotion; at last he said, in a lower tone—"Well, well, you know best, but I am much afraid you have not greatly improved in worldly knowledge since we parted. I begin to coincide with those learned in the law, who very wisely suspect every one to be a rogue till they are convinced to the contrary; and I should have hoped you would have adopted the same creed, since you have smarted pretty severely for your credulity; therefore pray endeavour to avoid again embroiling yourself with a man,

man, who possesses every requisite talent to be a successful villain, and who, it appears to me, has a set of subaltern agents at his beck and call, to whom he consigns all the dirty work that might impede his own progress in iniquity, or lead to the detection of his deep-laid schemes, since, believe me, this is language I dare not use respecting him, except in a *tête-à-tête* with you, as I need not tell you that he continues high in office, and enjoys more than a common share of popularity."

"Then the greater will be his fall, sir, should I succeed in unmasking him."

"It will be a very unequal struggle, Charles; you have not only a most extraordinary talented man to deal with, but a most powerful one; it will therefore prove an Herculean attempt. Did I see any probability of your unmasking the specious hypocrite, and his still more vile sister-in-law, I would second all your efforts; as it is, you would only, like another Quixote, be laughed at for your folly.

 Your

Your return to England will put them thoroughly upon their guard, and you will, in my opinion, be very fortunate if they overlook you, as too insignificant to excite their fear."

"I will do nothing rashly, sir; but surely you would not have me deterred from fulfilling a sacred promise by fear of the consequences. I have also a subaltern, whom I mean, as soon as I reach London, to send upon a voyage of discovery, since it is evident, that if the child is living, he is purposely concealed; and if it is dead, I much fear he was made away with."

"That I can hardly suppose; that the earl might, or may, wish him dead, but he is much too cautious to commit half the crimes his bad heart may suggest, so build no hopes upon that score. Who is the subaltern you are so anxious to employ?"

"My valet, whom I picked up by chance. He left England in the same ship which conveyed me to India as a common

common sailor; the captain led to my noticing him, by making me remark his hands, observing, that the poor youth (he was not more than eighteen) had not been much accustomed to handle ropes: he had engaged him to work his passage out, merely because he seemed in distress, and he did hope to procure him some situation, which might afford him bread when he reached Bengal. Upon the strength of this conversation I paid more attention to the youth, who has certainly been exceedingly well brought up; and as Emily was very anxious to serve him, I engaged him as my valet, secretary, &c. and have never had reason to repent having done so; during fourteen years, you may suppose he has become rather *au fait* of my story, and poor Emily thought he might prove most useful to me in making inquiries, which I could not do with the same hope of success."

"Agreed, but who and what is he?"

"All he ever told me was, that he had

 been

been the dupe of a very near relation, which had led to our meeting, since he was obliged to leave England in consequence of being ruined."

"Well, I only hope he will continue to deserve your regard; your taking him under your protection was perhaps more generous than prudent; but as his *romance* may terminate favourably, I cannot blame your charity: I hope you can rely upon his prudence as well as his dexterity, since he will prove no match for the earl. And now, to talk reason—should you succeed in discovering that, for some apparent sinister motive, his lordship first removed, and next concealed his son, trust me, he will make out a clear case, and you will be again censured for interfering with his domestic arrangements, since, though I agree she was purposely thrown in your way, that was no reason why you should have made free with his wife. She was much to be pitied, we will admit, yet that was not thought a sufficient excuse for her

having

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"I will be very cautious; you shall be my advising counsel, uncle; therefore, I feel assured you will not object to my establishing my innocence of the vile charge the earl affixed upon me, that of having stolen his son; and if in so doing I can unmask a villain, who first, by the basest arts, deprived me of the woman I loved, and then, having obtained the jewel, purposely threw her again in my way, that he might form a more elevated connexion, surely you cannot blame me. Had that man been an absolute sovereign, what a tyrant would he have shewn himself! But this is mere nonsense—I only hope I shall be able to display him to the world in his native colours. As to the child, my plans respecting him are yet in embryo; much must depend upon the manner in which he has been brought up. I merely intend to bring him forward as the son of Emily Murray ought to appear: but this is mere talking, I only wish I could immediately proceed to action,

tion, since I shall think every moment an age while I remain in uncertainty."

"Then I can only preach patience to you, as my doctors do to me. You are now a very rich man, so you will be able to pay for intelligence; though I do hope that you are now more aware of the real value of money than you were when you went abroad; not that I wish you to become a miser, God forbid! I wish you, like myself, to spend your income, with a little reserve to oblige a worthy friend, since I warn you, you will not find much ready money when the gout settles my accounts, perhaps not enough to pay my funeral expences, if you do the handsome thing."

"That is looking very far into futurity, uncle, since I dare believe, at this very moment, the celebrated actuary Morgan would declare your life was as good as mine; so to return to the present—I am fully aware of the influence of money upon society, since it can purchase every

thing

thing but health, real friends, and peace of mind, therefore it cannot constitute real happiness."

"No, no, if lord Delmont ever communes with his own conscience, he would acknowledge the truth of your remarks, which have convinced me that you have profited by your dear-bought experience, and that you will prove the comfort of my declining years, since I have hardly had a twinge of the gout since your arrival, which is no excuse for not having offered you some refreshment after your journey; but we somehow fell so soon into discourse upon the past, that it should appear I totally forgot the present. How goes time?"

The colonel, pulling out his watch, said—"It has just gone five, and I had rather not take any thing before dinner, since I make no doubt of being invited."

"Of course you will consider yourself perfectly at home in any house of mine; so

so you have only to issue your orders. I wrote you all this long since, and feel very grateful that you came out of your road to visit me before you proceeded to town. I was not aware it was so late, since five o'clock is my usual dinner-hour, except when I entertain a fashionable party, then I stretch a point, though I think it very absurd; but except one affects singularity, one must conform to the present mode of reversing the order of time. Surely my people suppose you dine here. Do ring the bell, that I may inquire, since you will not fare very sumptuously, if they have not made some addition to my Carthusian meal."

The valet's entrance interrupted his comments.

"Wilson, are you aware that it has struck five?"

"I believe dinner is ready, sir; we only waited till you rang."

"Very wise. Did you tell the housekeeper the colonel was to dine here?"

"I merely

"I merely told her of the colonel's arrival, sir: I could not say any more."

"Then you might have inquired; but Watson will, I hope, know better; she does put her head to some use. You remember the old lady, colonel? I believe she lived with me when you were born, and will continue to do so while we both live. Go, and let us have dinner as soon as you can."

The man retired.

The baronet entered into a few details respecting his household; and the colonel declared he should feel happy to renew his acquaintance with Mrs. Watson, laughing at his uncle's expressed doubts respecting the excellence of his repast, since, though he had fared very well on board the Indiaman, even dining on *terra firma* would be a luxury.

Sir Charles was gratified by his appearing to enjoy his company, and fancied himself so much better, that, seizing a couple of sticks which stood at his elbow, he

he declared he thought he could walk into the next room; but before he made the attempt, the servants entered to wheel him, as usual, to the table, and he suffered them to do so, observing—"I will not exhaust my strength, that I may the sooner run a race with you, colonel."

The elegant repast which his housekeeper had prepared met his approbation; therefore, while he is doing the honour of it, we will take a few retrograde steps, that our readers may be better able to understand the foregoing conversation.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

EDWARD Harland, the father of the lady whom we have already mentioned, as the much-regretted wife of colonel Murray, was the only son of a very rich London merchant. Having received a most excellent education for the line of life he was intended for, he was, soon after he came of age, sent into Germany by his father, to transact some private business with his correspondents at Hamburgh, and to visit several other mercantile houses, which did business with his own firm. Having spent a short time in Holland, he proceeded to Brussels, where he took up his abode, by particular desire, at a banker's, who had large dealings with England, and with whom he proposed spending a fortnight.

Monsieur

Monsieur Bertonville proved a pleasant and well-informed man; his family were no less agreeable, and during the first evening, many plans of amusement were formed. Mr. Harland spoke French very well, and seemed to enter into all their notions with very flattering alacrity.

During breakfast next morning, monsieur chanced to mention that he had just learned from a brother banker, that a young English nobleman had been, it was supposed, the serious dupe of some sharpers of various nations, who, finding he had not sufficient cash in his banker's hands to answer the demands they made upon his purse, meant, he supposed, in turn to call him out, by way of frightening him out of every valuable in his possession.

"Can a man of family be so pressed for money?" asked Harland.

"So his banker tells me, who ought, in my opinion, to have interfered in his behalf, since there are Englishmen among the

the sharpers who deserve a halter, as they hunt down the prey for these foreign locusts."

"Do you know the gentleman's name who has been so drawn in?"

"Lord Exmore, son of the earl of Delmont. I would interfere, if I did not dread appearing officious."

"Then I will step forward, and endeavour to rescue his lordship from these harpies; surely the magistracy of Brussels will second my endeavours."

"No doubt; and at all events I will, if his lordship will suffer me to arrange his business."

Thus empowered, Mr. Harland proceeded to the hotel where lord Exmore lodged, and having been shewn his apartment, he entered, unannounced, amidst a large party of gentlemen, who seemed to be at very high words, some siding with one party, others with the other.

The entrance of a total stranger occasioned a momentary silence. Mr. Harland,

land, who felt undaunted in a good cause, asked whether lord Exmore was of the party.

A very fine young fellow instantly stepped forward, saying—"I answer to that name, sir; and you find me surrounded by some gentlemen who have, they say, won more money of me when I was in liquor, than I can pay now I am sober, and by some friends, who advise me to set them at defiance. The fact is, I lost two thousand pounds last night, which is more than I can raise this morning. So now may I inquire to what cause I am indebted for your unexpected visit?"

"To my wish to serve your lordship. I learnt at breakfast that you were in an unpleasant predicament, therefore came to inquire whether my purse, or my advice, could extricate you from your dilemma?"

"Your advice we do not require, nor would attend to," exclaimed a tall, fine-looking, middle-aged man. "Lord Ex-

more

more might be in liquor, but he lost his money fairly, and now pretends that he cannot command above a couple of hundred pounds, if he speaks truth, and will not give his bond for the sum. He ought not to have staked it. Had he won, he would have expected to have been paid, and his friends, or rather acquaintance, who pretend to take his part, would have called me scoundrel, had I told him I could not pay my debts of honour. Now I could have given him a check upon my banker last night for twice the sum he lost, which would have been honoured the moment the house was opened this morning."

Lord Exmore's friends, or perhaps, like Mr. O'Callaghan, we had better say acquaintance, did not appear to credit this statement.

Not so Mr. Harland.—"I cannot doubt your assertion, sir," he replied; "and, in return for your plain dealing, if you will accompany me to your banker's, and he

will convince me that he has as much money of yours in his hands as you demand from lord Exmore, or that he would have answered your drafts at sight, to that amount, I will immediately, at my own risk and peril, pay you your full demand upon his lordship."

"Bravo!" exclaimed his lordship's acquaintance; and—"You shall be no loser by your generosity, believe me, sir," cried the peer; "though I was little prepared to expect such an offer from a total stranger."

Mr. O'Callaghan and his party did not seem so elated, but hoping to bring himself off, the Irishman declared he was ready to proceed immediately to Monsieur Bertonville's, upon whom he had a letter of credit, though he was more properly a merchant than a banker.

"That does not matter; we will go alone, if you please, gentlemen," rejoined Mr. Harland. "Pray wait our return," leading the way into the street, when he

suffered

suffered the Irishman, who seemed lost in thought, to precede him to Monsieur Bertonville's.

The result of their visit may be foreseen. Monsieur had never had two hundred pounds of the Irishman's in his possession; and it was finally agreed, that if he would take that sum, instead of the thousands he demanded, it should be immediately paid him, on condition that he would return to lord Exmore's, with Mr. Harland, and declare himself fully satisfied; and as monsieur hinted, that if he did not accede to this very handsome proposal, he must have recourse to the police to settle the business, the blacklegs merely declared that it was very hard, but made no further objections; and having received the stipulated sum in French crowns, and in a canvas bag, Mr. Harland and he returned to lord Exmore's apartment, when O'Callaghan, swinging his bag while addressing his companions, said —"Come along, I told you I should re-

ceive the money. I am perfectly satisfied. I hope your lordship will be more fortunate in future."

The consternation of the peer and his party may be supposed; but they were soon relieved from their fears; and as Mr. Harland requested lord Exmore would repay him at his leisure, his kind interference led to an immediate intimacy, and proved the foundation of their future friendship.

CHAPTER III.

THE death of Mr. Harland, senior, recalled his son to England, who succeeded to his business, a most flourishing concern, since he was supposed to have inherited at least two hundred thousand pounds.

Whether his known riches, or gratitude for past favours, rendered lord Exmore

more

more than ever inclined to continue their intimacy, we must leave in doubt; suffice it to say, that even after the viscount became earl of Delmont, he continued, and often declared himself, the stanch friend of the city merchant, whose purse continued open to him, and who was, for such is human nature, inclined to overlook his lordship's foibles, in favour of his rank; and as Mr. Harland was his frequent guest, he formed an intimacy with a cousin of the earl's, whose small fortune had not tempted any man of equal rank to offer her his hand; she therefore graciously accepted the offers of Mr. Harland, whose ample settlements perfectly consoled her for her loss of rank; and as she lived in very great style, her parties were more talked of than many right honourables; but as happiness is seldom permanent, after giving birth to a son, she fell into bad health, and paid the debt of nature, ere her child had attained his third year.

 Whether

Whether Mr. Harland deeply regretted her we cannot say; but he sometimes did acknowledge to his friends, that unequal matches were not likely to promote happines, since at first he thought his lady much too high and dashing in her notions, and for the last two years he was obliged to humour the fancies and caprices of a peevish invalid, who, when not solely engrossed by her complaints, was forming plans for the future aggrandizement of her beloved Augustus, as he had been named after the earl, her cousin; she therefore stipulated that he should be brought up a gentleman—with the fortune his father could give him, she could not bear the idea of his entering a counting-house; had Mr. Harland been a banker, she might have agreed to this (on her side) descendant of nobility continuing his name in the firm, but to hear a son of her's styled even a merchant, she should think a disgrace to his origin.

Mr. Harland never contradicted her,

not

not wishing to hasten her death, though he would have been much better pleased had she turned her thoughts to more serious subjects, and have trusted to his parental regard for the welfare of his son. She was not, however, aware of her real danger; like most consumptive people, she made no doubt of recovering; the spring was to remove her cough and oppression, and the summer was to complete her cure. When, however, she could no longer deceive herself respecting her situation, she merely became more anxious to prevent her son from increasing his fortune by trade, till she wearied her husband into giving her a solemn promise that her darling should follow one or other of the liberal professions. Having so far succeeded in dictating what course her son was to pursue, she, grown bolder by her husband's kind concession, now wished him to have pledged his honour that he would never marry again, but devote his life to this beloved child. This selfish request he

 quietly

quietly waved, affecting to suppose her in jest, till death relieved him from her importunities.

For a short time Mr. Harland enjoyed the pleasure of being once more master of his own time, his own house, and his own money; but being of a domestic turn, he was no sooner out of mourning, than he resolved to look among his city friends for a second wife, having firmly resolved not to go west of Temple-Bar again; and he finally selected the only daughter of a Russia merchant, whose very large fortune was, by Mr. Harland's desire, secured to her, and any children she might bring him.

This lady was far better calculated to render his home comfortable, and himself happy; and though not so fashionable as her predecessor, she did the honours of his house with even more elegance and hospitality, and was, in consequence, liked and visited by all the late Mrs. Harland's boasted family. She brought her husband

band two children, a boy and a girl—the first was named Edward, after his father; the second, Emily, after the mother; and though she did not begin to form plans for their future greatness quite so early as the mother of Augustus, she looked forward to their doing honour to their name and family; when, at the expiration of five years, in consequence of a fall, a premature confinement took place, which terminated her existence in less than a week. Most sincerely was she regretted by her afflicted husband; and the young Augustus, who was remarkably good-tempered, and who considered her as his mother, shed his first bitter tears for her death. Edward and Emily joined in his grief, though by no means aware of the extent of their loss. While this excellent woman lived, Augustus had been her pupil, but as his father could not bestow the same degree of attention upon the volatile and rather idle boy, he sent him to a very good preparatory school, and engaged

gaged a well-recommended nursery-governess to take charge of the two younger children, not feeling at all inclined to make a third choice.

He continued upon the same friendly terms with lord Delmont, though the earl had not of late risen in his esteem; but he supposed, he sometimes told a city friend—"That the moral code of a peer was not required to be so strict as that of a merchant."

The earl had now been married some years, and had two sons, who were under the care of a private tutor, preparatory to their being placed at Eton, where he strongly recommended to the merchant to send his godson Augustus, since, if he had talents, there they would be brought forth, not to mention the connexions he might form, which might prove of the greatest utility to his future advancement in life; and as his lordship still thought the merchant might be of service to him, he generally spoke of Augustus

as

as his young cousin, declaring that his sons considered him as a relation.

Mr. Harland certainly felt gratified by these speeches, and as he told the earl that his son was not to succeed him in business, he might qualify himself for the bar, or the pulpit, at Eton.

"In your place I should purchase him a commission; his maternal grandfather was in the army, and my interest shall not be wanting to forward his promotion."

Mr. Harland placed but little faith in these vague promises; but as the earl affected to feel interested in the child's welfare, he so far acceded to his wishes, as to send his son to Eton with lord Exmore and the honourable Marcus Mirvan, the latter of whom was the earl's decided favourite; indeed, nature had been most bountiful to this youth, who was of the same age as Augustus, of the finest order of fine forms; his complexion had the deep glow of health, and his eyes its

clearest lustre; his heart appeared to be the seat of truth and unaffected simplicity, while his sound understanding and vivid imagination soon made him distinguished above his fellows.

The viscount was a fine youth, and very well disposed, but he was totally advised by the much-admired Marcus, who soon led both him and the more ductile Augustus as he pleased; and when young Harland returned home for the holidays, he could only talk of Marcus Mirvan.

The merchant wished to see this phœnix, therefore asked the viscount and his brother to spend a few days at Clapham with their schoolfellow; and he soon did ample justice to the very superior talents of this favoured youth, who seemed fully aware of the advantages he possessed, and not quite so open and candid as he had been represented; still he made no doubt of his proving a shining character, and a good orator, and was not surprised at the sort of authority he exercised over

over his brother and friend, telling the merchant, that Augustus seemed to have a decided predilection for the army, which had better be indulged, as few people rose to eminence if thwarted in their plans.

The merchant laughed at his youthful adviser, asking him what profession he meant to pursue?

"Oh, my fate was decided upon when I came into the world! a younger son had always better turn his mind to the diplomatic line. I shall, of course, be a member, and probably a placeman; I must rise by my talents, and I had rather be prime minister than a field-marshal."

"And lord Exmore, what line is he to pursue?" inquired the amused Mr. Harland.

"He is to be an earl, you know, sir; therefore he has only to study sufficiently to be able, once in his life, to move an address, and then to content himself with saying *ay* to what my colleagues and I shall devise for the good of the nation."

The

The merchant was now fully convinced that Marcus would more than rival his more modest brother; still, had they been his children, he should have given the preference to the more quiet viscount, whom Marcus appeared to hold in the greatest contempt; therefore, though he gave him credit for very superior talents, he rather doubted his possessing the excellent heart the earl said he did, and he was convinced that he was more selfish than agreed with his character of simplicity; still he might be of use to the very indolent Augustus, who, after spending the usual time at Eton, was removed, by his own desire, and at the suggestion of Marcus, to a military college, when he and his brother went to Cambridge, where he was indefatigable in the studies required for the line of life he expected to adopt; and before he was nineteen, he was placed in a very honourable and lucrative situation in the Treasury, where he gave such satisfaction, and displayed such an innate

knowledge

knowledge of finance, that the earl, in the pride of his heart, frequently assured the merchant, that Marcus would soon point out the means of liquidating the national debt; in short, to believe his lordship, this darling son was the tenth wonder of the world.

While the young statesman was thus displaying his talents, lord Exmore went upon his travels, and the ever ductile Augustus, in consequence of his Mentor Marcus's advice, persuaded his father to purchase him a pair of colours in the Guards, since this would enable them to meet daily, as Marcus, like his father, was sometimes straightened for cash, and he preferred borrowing of the young ensign to applying to the earl; he, besides, found his friend, as he styled him, so open to persuasion, that he was frequently very useful to him; and in all their youthful frolics or excesses, though actually the promoter of many absurd schemes, Marcus could always shift the blame and the re-

sponsibility

sponsibility upon the less wily Augustus; in short, he managed so well, that even Mr. Harland thought he prevented his son from committing many follies, being well aware that the Guards was not the exact school for morality he should, had it been permitted him, have chosen for him.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE the merchant's eldest son was thus making his *début* upon the stage of life, his younger, who had just left a most excellent commercial academy, was received into his counting-house, where he bid fair to be of the greatest use, his real abilities and very strong mind having been exceedingly well cultivated; whether he would appear to the same advantage as a statesman, as Mr. Mirvan promised to do, Mr. Harland rather doubted, yet

yet he often thought he might, in the end, prove the more useful member of the community. As the embryo prime minister held trade in very sovereign contempt, when compared to the more learned professions, he soon detached Augustus from his brother, whom he spoke of as a worthy, plodding young man, but quite out of their line; for Mr. Harland senior, he always professed the highest respect—such merchants were the support of their country; besides, Mr. Harland was a gentleman, and distantly related, by marriage, to his own family; he was therefore company for any man; but he really could not extend his indulgence to the young clerk, who was only calculated to sit at a desk, and to keep his father's books; indeed, as he was intended for trade, it was fortunate he did not repine at spending the prime of his life among clerks, factors, &c.

Augustus was a very apt scholar, therefore no intimacy existed between him and

his

his brother; but of his sister he was very proud; she bid fair to be a first-rate beauty, and had received the best education that one of the first London establishments for female education afforded; she spent the vacations at Clapham, and was certainly, though he never displayed it, the merchant's favourite child. A distant relation of her mother now kept his house, and with this lady she visited all the genteel families in their vicinity, who all made a point of assisting Mr. Harland to make her time pass agreeably. During the summer vacation that succeeded her seventeenth birthday, she met, at a Scotch merchant's of great eminence, a captain Murray, of the light dragoons, who paid her such attention, and struck her as being so elegant, and so well-informed a young man, that ere the expiration of the six holiday weeks, he had declared that the happiness of his life depended upon her proving favourable to his suit, and she thought she must be miserable with any other

other man; but aware that, indulgent as her father had ever proved himself, he would not think a soldier of fortune, whose *gude blude* was his chief recommendation, a proper son-in-law, though he certainly had a very rich uncle, who might make him his heir, still as there was a *but* in the case, he could not offer to jointure his wife out of an estate he might never possess; this he candidly acknowledged to the fair Emily; yet as time might do much for them, as they were both very young, they agreed to correspond, through the means of a school friend of Emily, who generally spent Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, with an infirm relative, who had brought her up, and who was depriving herself almost of comforts to educate Jane Elton, who was destined to seek her fortune in the East. This young person was rather shewy than handsome, and prided herself much upon her family, since she was related to the countess of Delmont, who did assist her excellent aunt with some

some money, but more advice; and as lady Delmont had some friends in India, to them this orphan girl was to be sent, when of an age to marry.

Jane had no objection to seek riches and rank even in Hindostan, though, had she been allowed her choice, she would have preferred Marcus Mirvan, whom she frequently saw at his father's, for a husband, and England for a residence; but she soon found the heart of Marcus was not to be easily won, and that, had she been beautiful as a fabled houri, her poverty would have prevented him from noticing her, except as a sprightly, chatty girl, whose visible admiration of him had rather gratified his vanity; they were, therefore, upon a very friendly footing, when Emily opened her heart to her, and requested her to stand her friend.

Jane, who had frequently experienced her liberality, and who foresaw that this clandestine correspondence would place the inconsiderate girl totally in her power, readily

readily came into all her plans; and, for the ensuing five months, the lovers corresponded through her means, and were looking forward, with the feelings of their age, to frequent meetings during the Christmas holidays, when the regiment to which the young lover belonged was rather unexpectedly ordered to Ireland. This was a severe disappointment, but Jane proved an able consoler; she was to continue to receive and dispatch their joint letters; and as it was not expected that the captain would be long in Ireland, she declared she thought his present absence might prove very fortunate, since, had they met as frequently as they proposed during the vacation, they might have prematurely disclosed their mutual affection, and thus have led to a much longer separation, if no greater check had been placed over them. In short, she reasoned so ably, and seemed so much their joint friend, that they each considered her as their guardian angel, and they would

would as soon have doubted each other's love, as the sincerity of such a tried friend.

For some time Emily was favoured with her lover's letters, when weeks, nay months, elapsed, without any coming to hand.

Miss Elton was even more surprised than she was; nay, declared she had been so little prepared for this total cessation of her functions, that she had written herself to captain Murray, but had not been favoured with any return to her compliment, which the more surprised her, as she understood he was going upon foreign service; and certainly she spared no pains to induce Emily to drive this worthless ingrate from her heart and recollection.

Mr. Harland, who had noticed with regret his daughter's late want of spirits, which he attributed to the monotony of a school, was resolving to take her home, when he was both surprised and flattered by a proposal of lord Delmont, to unite their families in a still closer degree, by

marrying

marrying Emily to his favourite Marcus, who having frequently seen her, had not failed to admire her, launching out in praise of this, his avowed favourite son, whom he only wished to see properly established; and he had much rather he should select a young woman who had not made her *début* in the fashionable world, than one of the most admired belles of the day, since the former was much more likely to make a sensible man happy. He intended to bring Marcus into the House at the next general election, which was close at hand, and he wished him to marry previous to his becoming a member. As for lord Exmore, he was a very good young man; he was making the grand tour, and might shine as a *plenipotentiary* or *chargé d'affaires* at some secondary court; but he never did, nor never would possess either the solid or the brilliant talents of Marcus; indeed there were few families of distinction who would object to his alliance.

We

We shall not follow the earl any longer, as he continued in this strain for a considerable time, since Mr. Harland did not choose to interrupt him, not feeling so wonderfully elated by this unexpected proposal as the earl had hoped, since he very justly supposed that the certainty which both his lordship and his son entertained of his giving his daughter a very large fortune had greatly increased her attractions in their eyes. The earl, he knew, lived, if report did him justice, more than up to his income, and he did not suppose that he would be able to make any great addition to the salary his son derived from his situation, which, though more than adequate to the wants of a single man, would but ill support a fashionable wife, much less provide for a family; it would, therefore, be no bad speculation to marry his lovely Emily, to whom he proposed giving sixty thousand pounds; and, certainly, Marcus's figure, acknowledged talents, and connexions, made him an equal-

ly

ly good match for her; he therefore promised the earl to make his proposals known to his daughter, and if she had no objections to his son, he should have his free consent, and what money he could spare to begin the world with, adding—"Though Emily is, in my opinion, very young to marry—time ought to be allowed her to make her own election; therefore, all I can promise your lordship is, that I will plead your son's cause; but I shall never exert my authority in behalf of any man."

The earl, though very much disappointed at the merchant's not having snapped much more eagerly at so very eligible an offer, was obliged to appear satisfied, merely hinting how very advantageous such a connexion might prove to Augustus and Edward, as it would ensure the speedy promotion of the one, and might be the means of procuring some government contracts for the other.

"Then, strange as it may appear, my lord, I am not fond of contracts. Men

 must

must compound very much with their conscience if they wish to render them lucrative."

"Come, come, many a man, of very excellent character, has made a fortune by army contracts; if they are very squeamish, they employ a deputy to help them out."

"Then I should fear I should have his sins to answer for as well as my own; but I mean no reflections upon any set of men, since I merely mean to decline any such favours. As to my eldest son's promotion, let him endeavour to rise by his merit, or by purchase, sooner than by interest—it will be more honourable; therefore, I conclude as I began—my daughter must decide for herself. I may venture to advise, but I will never control her inclinations;" and with this indefinite answer his lordship was forced to be satisfied, though he had hoped to have learned what he meant to give Emily, and to have been able to report to his son that the

the matter was as good as concluded; however, as it was useless to press the merchant more urgently, he took a very polite leave, observing, that Marcus would make a much more able pleader, should he be allowed to address Miss Harland.

CHAPTER V.

MARCUS was impatiently waiting the earl's return in Hill-street, having left his office, by permission, earlier than usual, under the pretence of private business. The moment his lordship entered his study, and had given orders that they might not be interrupted, he exclaimed—"Well, sir, I suppose I need not despair?—will the old man come down with a plum?"

"Not so fast, my dear Marcus; Harland did not snap at the bait so readily as I ex-

I expected; he has no objection to you for a son-in-law——"

"I should not have supposed he had," interrupted the much-mortified half-disappointed young statesman. "But pray go on."

The earl repeated, nearly word for word, what had passed.

"Oh, then I consider the matter as concluded," rejoined Marcus, "since Emily is to decide for herself, as she is, I know, just in the humour to throw herself into the arms of the first man that will pop the question; since you must know, like all boarding-school girls, she is very romantic, and has already, poor dear, fancied herself in love with an officer of dragoons, who wrote verses to her eyebrow, and who used to correspond with his dulcinea through the means of Jane Elton, my pretty, and very poor cousin, who, upon my mentioning Emily Harland in terms of praise, told me, under the seal of secrecy,

secrecy, how the chit was situated; and as Jane is a worthy girl, and wishes her friend well, we concerted measures to break off this very improper connexion, without betraying Emily's secrets to her father; and, as if fate was inclined to second our endeavours, the fellow's regiment was ordered to Ireland, and is now gone upon foreign service; therefore, all that was requisite was to suppress their joint letters—pique and mortification has done the rest. Murray will doubtless seek another mistress, and Emily will think herself much honoured by my attentions."

"Well done, thou second Machiavel!" exclaimed his amused father; "since, should Emily disappoint you, revenge is in your power. What do you mean to do for Jane? she is a shrewd clever girl, and deserves encouragement."

"I have a scheme for her advancement, that I make no doubt of bringing to bear, since I must prevent her playing me false; therefore I mean she shall marry Augustus Harland.

Harland. I promised she should share the merchant's fortune, and thus I shall ensure her coming in for the best part. Augustus is a mere puppet in my hands; he has shook his elbows so much lately, that he will be obliged to sell his commission. So you, sir, must exert your interest to procure him a situation under government. I will manage matters. The merchant must set him handsomely afloat; therefore Jane will have no need to go to India; and as she will soon be able to manage her husband, I make no doubt she will induce him to draw pretty freely upon the old gentleman. When I have secured Emily, and a large fortune down, and a still larger in reversion, I will marry Jane; but charity begins at home; so she must assist me to obtain her friend, and then I will reward her with a husband."

The earl was both entertained and gratified by being thus admitted into the confidence of the wily Marcus, who considered his lordship merely as a necessary agent,

agent, requisite to forward his schemes, since he had determined the earl should make such promises to Mr. Harland as would put him in possession of a larger income than he could obtain by any other means; he therefore now adroitly led to the subject, by observing—"It would be necessary to be prepared for the natural questions Mr. Harland would ask, respecting settlements, property, &c."

"I had intended to offer to allow you a thousand a-year while I live, and to purchase and furnish you a house in town."

"That would be more than I have any right to expect; therefore, suppose you make over to me the small estate in Surry, which you inherited from my mother's uncle; that is not entailed—the rental does not exceed eight hundred a-year, and this would be some provision for a family."

The earl paused upon this proposal, as this was the only landed property at his

own disposal, and he had intended to retain it while he lived, as a resource in case he should be hard run.

Marcus perceived his indecision, therefore thus proceeded—"I merely suggested the proposal, as a blind to the merchant. You shall receive the rents while you live; but the larger you talk, the more he must do; and, except all her own money is tied up, you can offer to make no other settlement upon my wife. You would not have me appear a mere beggar, in comparison to a merchant's daughter? So only do you make offers; we will arrange matters to your satisfaction. I would rather not marry, than appear to do so for money. Mr. Harland is a man of sense and judgment; if we do not play our cards well, he will either offer a very inadequate fortune, or tie the principal up for any children we may have."

The earl was convinced by this reasoning, and even promised to talk very large to his friend; and thus the father and son

separated, Marcus to write further instructions to his cousin Elton, the earl to consider how much he could offer, without greatly decreasing his own income; and as he was ably assisted by lady Delmont, who promised great things, he hoped to procure at least a plum for their joint darling, who already led them to do and say just what he pleased, since this much-admired youth at once gratified their pride and his own interest.

Meanwhile the worthy merchant, having reconsidered all that had passed between the earl and him, sent for his daughter, to spend a fortnight at Clapham, when he candidly communicated to her his lordship's proposal.

Emily, who had been almost talked into love with Marcus Mirvan, by her kind friend, Jane Elton, blushed deeply, and became very much agitated, which rather gratified her father, who now placed Marcus's present and future prospects in tempting array before her, acknowledging that he

 should

should be proud of the connexion, since many women, of equal fortune, and higher rank, would not object to appearing as the bride of the honourable Mr. Mirvan.

Emily was quite of his opinion, since Jane Elton had assured her that she could not punish captain Murray more than by marrying a man so much his superior, as she had been fully given to understand that Marcus would certainly, in time, be chancellor of the exchequer, if not prime minister; a peerage might be considered as a matter of course—at all events, all her children would be amply provided for. Thus she continued to build castles in the air; while her excellent father was assisting her imagination, by placing the bright side of the alliance to her view. Not so her brother Edward, who felt really hurt, when he learned that she had accepted this scion of nobility; he seriously advised her to take a short time to study his disposition; he thought him a true courtier, ready to ask upon his death-bed,

bed, "If, where I am going, I could serve you, sir." As to his being the friend of Augustus, that was no proof of his merit, since their brother turned up his nose at trade, and appeared to look down even upon their father.

Emily thanked him for his kind advice, but declared herself in love with the elegant Marcus, who now enacted the lover with his usual skill; and as Emily was removed from school, she requested permission to invite her beloved friend, Jane Elton, to spend the ensuing three months with her; and had he searched Europe, Marcus could not have found a more able auxiliary; she smoothed every difficulty; she kept the mind of Emily in the proper tone; and she led her to declare to her indulgent father, that her future happiness depended upon her union with Mr. Mirvan.

Jane acknowledged much esteem for Edward, the *prudent*, as she styled him; but declared that Augustus, *the beautiful*

and brave, was her favourite; he displayed his noble origin in every action; were she to marry, she hoped it would be to such a man.

Marcus kindly repeated these praises to the young officer, adding—"It is a pity you are in the guards, as ministers mean, at my father's request, to promote Jane's husband to a place in my office."

Augustus, who felt the necessity of disposing of his commission, evinced his sagacity in taking a hint; and thus this second marriage was in a fair way of being celebrated.

When the earl and the merchant met to arrange money matters, previous to Marcus and Emily's union, his lordship began the conference, by saying—"I have purchased a house for my son in Dover-street, and the first upholsterers are even now putting in the necessary furniture. I shall also give up to him Violet Bank, my villa, and adjoining estate, at Mortlake, in Surry; and I will double the income

come which he derives from his place under government, which nets sixteen hundred a-year. Lady Delmont, who came into some ready money, which was placed at her own disposal when I inherited Violet Bank, means to present him with plate, linen, and china; and when she dies, he will inherit all her savings. Exmore will be amply provided for by the family estates."

Mr. Harland was agreeably surprised to find his son-in-law would be so well provided for, and, as expected, declared that he would give his daughter sixty thousand pounds down, merely requiring that the half should be settled upon any children which they might have, and promising to allow his daughter four hundred a-year for her own private expences, merely requiring Violet Bank to be settled as her jointure house, the produce of the estate as her jointure, which, in addition to what he meant to leave her when he died, would make her a very handsome income.

The

The earl, who had expected not less than a plum, wished he had not talked so large, but repentance came too late; and to his still-greater chagrin, he found that his son required him to perform all that he had promised; yet so adroitly did he manage matters, Jane Elton being his jackall, that he induced the merchant to insist upon his lordship's making over the house and furniture to his son, together with the estate, and also to give a bond for the promised annuity, thus screening himself from any imputation of having overreached his father; indeed, he verbally promised the earl never to require the annuity, except pressed for money.

Matters being thus settled, Marcus led the fair Emily to the altar, and immediately took possession of the house in Dover-street, where they began life soberly. Jane Elton, who had, during their courtship, inherited the small property of her generous relative, having resolved not to leave England, took up her abode with them,

them, and within two months after Emily had changed her name, she became the wife of Augustus Harland, who sold his commission merely to oblige Mrs. Harland, he told his father, and accepted of a less lucrative situation in the same office with Mr. Mirvan, as a fortune with his wife, who brought him a few thousands besides; and as the merchant resolved to make no difference between his children, he bestowed upon him thirty thousand pounds, in addition to a similar sum which he had given him when he became of age, leaving it in doubt whether he should do any more for him when he died; and upon this money, and the income arising from his place, he and his lady began housekeeping in a far superior style to Marcus Mirvan, whose innate avarice, which he misnamed prudence, induced him to live much within his income, except when he wished to display his hospitality to those from whom he expected to derive

derive such future advantages as would amply compensate for the present expence.

CHAPTER VI.

Little of moment occurred during the ensuing two years. Emily was certainly greatly disappointed in her husband, though, hitherto, he had treated her with as much kindness as it was in his nature to shew any one; still she found herself restricted in many particulars; and but for her father's allowance, would have been often restricted in money matters; as it was, Marcus had first hinted, and then proposed, that she should pay her own servants—that is, her man and maid; and he next required her to pay part of their travelling expences; and thus went on encroaching

croaching upon her pocket-money, till he rendered the merchant's generosity a very great saving to himself.

Edward Harland, who had rather laughed at the slights he had received from Marcus and Augustus before his sister's marriage, had not, as we have already said, exactly approved of the connexion; but as she loved the man, he supposed it might contribute to his beloved Emily's happiness; he had therefore never mentioned his objections, even to his father, and ever seemed, as he felt, most anxious to promote his sister's happiness, making a point of being at home whenever he hoped to see her at Clapham, and now and then visiting her in Dover-street; but these visits were becoming very rare, as he perceived that he was daily becoming less welcome to the ambitious Marcus, who could not brook being considered as a brother by a mere clerk; had he been in partnership with his father, he might have thought it necessary to treat him with

with more politeness; as it was, he affected scarcely to notice him, and never invited him to repeat his visits, much less to eat or drink in his house.

Augustus, who really liked Edward, was much more kind towards him; indeed, he thought it policy to be civil to the future merchant—nay, his wily wife behaved very cordially towards him, often inviting him to her snug dinners, when only their sister was present, as Marcus was frequently engaged to political parties, where he displayed his knowledge and talents, while his wife was enjoying the unrestrained conversation of her favourite brother. These attentions of her still confidential friend and sister-in-law attached her still more to that scheming woman, and prevented her from feeling the restrictions her husband had laid her under to be so very galling, when an express reached England, which informed the earl that lord Exmore, his eldest son, was lying dangerously ill at Vienna, whither he

he had accompanied the then British ambassador, as a sort of honorary member in his suite, since the allowance the earl made him was very inadequate to his wants, greatly as he circumscribed his expences; he had therefore accepted a sort of situation, as supernumerary secretary, by way of making both ends meet, since, indulgent as the earl was, and continued to be, to his favourite Marcus, of whom he was doatingly fond, and extremely proud, he was still less inclined to do his eldest son common justice, always mentioning him with contempt, declaring he was ashamed to acknowledge the relationship. However, it was fortunate that the weak young man was born before his brother, as he would never, like the highly-gifted Marcus have risen by his talents, as he made no doubt of his younger son obtaining a peerage, ere he was forty; still, when the news of his dangerous situation reached England, his lordship found it necessary to affect a proper degree of sorrow.

Marcus

Marcus played his part much the best, only wishing that it had been in his power to have hastened to Vienna, since the benefits which might accrue to him from his death would not console him for the loss of his beloved Edwin, strongly advising the earl to visit Vienna. To this his lordship strenuously objected. Edwin would either be no more, or much better, ere he could travel that distance; and as the ambassador had promised to pay him every attention, and appeared to be very much interested about him, he should merely put himself to a great expence, and incur a very great fatigue, without benefiting his son.

Mr. Harland senior thought he displayed more prudence than feeling, and even told him so; he rather exonerated Marcus, as he knew he could not, without much difficulty, obtain the necessary leave of absence, at least so Mr. Mirvan made it appear; and the merchant gave him credit for a degree of fraternal affection he was

so far from feeling, that, as he hoped and considered his brother's death as certain, he was bitterly regretting what he termed his hasty marriage. As lord Exmore, the next heir to a very ancient peerage, he might have picked and chosen among the first women of his own rank, and he now knew of a titled lady, who would, first and last, have more than double the fortune he had received with Emily Harland, to whom, as lord Exmore, he might have aspired. Of course, his matrimonial fetters were daily becoming more galling; he was therefore really planning many iniquitous schemes, in conjunction with the arch-fiend, his confident, that is Mrs. Harland, or *cousin Jane*, as he generally styled her, who was so completely in his power, that even had she not loved mischief almost for mischief sake, she must, if required, have done his bidding, when two unexpected events induced this precious pair to postpone their base plans till a future and better opportunity.

Emily,

Emily, who was too good and innocent herself to suspect evil in a woman she considered as her sworn friend, saw no impropriety in the intimacy subsisting between her and her husband, since this artful woman, though always pointing out his want of feeling and unkindness to Emily, observed, that by behaving with apparent friendship to him, she kept him in good-humour, and often disconcerted some of his plans to annoy his patient wife; Emily was therefore completely her dupe, and her innate principles alone prevented her from complaining of the many slights she bore from the much-admired Marcus, who understood the art of tormenting in the highest perfection, and could, while appearing all kindness to his wife, contrive to wound her feelings most deeply.

But to return to the events we alluded to:—Mrs. Harland was one morning rallying Emily upon her approaching greatness, declaring, that proud as

Marcus

Marcus was already, a title would render him insupportable.—"Yes, my dear Emily, I fear me you will be another proof of splendid misery."

Emily replied, that she hoped better things. Marcus was now all anxiety to obtain a peerage by his talents; if he obtained one by inheritance, she thought it might have a very beneficial effect upon his feelings and behaviour.—"And as I have now every reason to believe I am in the family-way, and you know how anxious he is to have a son, I think we shall be a very happy couple at last; but don't mention the circumstance till my increasing size renders it necessary to make it public."

We need not tell our readers how well her secret was kept.

Marcus was, for a moment, rather gratified with the idea of becoming a father, still, as he told his confident, he deeply regretted that the heir to the honours of his ancient family should be, on the mother's

ther's side, so ignobly connected; however, he should let his wife keep her secret—a short time would oblige her to mention the circumstance. He was still regretting his having, by his precipitancy, run the risk of having the noble blood of the Mirvans contaminated by the plebeian blood of the Harlands, when the earl was announced, and shewn into his private study.

"It is very fortunate I did not, as you wished, set out for Vienna, Marcus, since Edwin is out of danger—completely convalescent, the ambassador writes me; and he has such an opinion of his talents (no proof of his own), that he will, if he lives, be appointed *charge d'affaires* at the prince of ***'s court."

"Then I dare say he was never [illegible] ill as his excellency represented," replied the equally-disappointed Marcus; "however, I had rather obtain a peerage by my talents than by inheritance," thus verifying the fable of the fox and the grapes; since

since however light he might make of the matter, he grew daily more arbitrary towards his wife, and even his confident suffered for the severe check his ambition had received.

At last the patient Emily gave birth to a son, the hero of our tale; and we must do Marcus the justice to acknowledge, that he appeared to share in the joy of the grandfather upon the occasion; possibly he believed it was to his interest to court Mr. Harland, who stood godfather to this scion of nobility, and gave him his father's and his own Christian name; and what Mr. Mirvan thought much more obliging, he, on the evening which had made his son a Christian, put into the young father's hand a deed, saying—"That will entitle you to receive five hundred a-year till your son is of age, when he is to receive the principal sum; should he die before he enters his twenty-second year, it is to descend to the next child, of either sex, upon the same conditions; and should

none of your children attain the age of majority, it will revert to your wife, principal and interest, and be wholly at her disposal."

Marcus, though gratified in one sense, was very much disappointed in another; still he played his part with his usual policy; and the excellent Mr. Harland retired, assured that his generosity had been fully appreciated by both his daughter and son-in-law; nay, he even blamed Edward for hinting that Marcus dealt too much in French plate to be sincere, declaring—"That if he did but make his Emily happy, he could readily forgive his little pride of family, which was, after all, very natural, and he hoped that the spirit he evinced would prevent his ever disgracing the name he might value too highly."

Edward, who was, like his sister, much too good to suspect others of being different from what they appeared, agreed that he might be prejudiced; but to him there seemed

seemed a cool insolence about Mr. Mirvan, which did not meet his approbation.

Mr. Harland, who knew he had been treated very cavalierly by this much-admired and very popular man, made allowances for his severity, since there were times when his own opinion of Marcus was shaken; still, as Emily never complained, and as there was now a prospect of a family, he flattered himself he had taken alarm prematurely, and that his daughter had more reason to be proud than to blame her husband.

Emily paid him the first visit when she emerged from her confinement, and as the child, whom she suckled, grew a very fine fellow, Mr. Harland became very fond of him, and a more frequent visitor than heretofore in Dover-street, where Mrs. Augustus Harland also spent much time, always contriving to render her visits acceptable to Emily, often declaring, when they were *tête-à-tête*—" She had more patience than she should have with

with one of the most unreasonable man living. I do not think my surly cousin could tell any body in the morning what would please him in the evening; in short, to thwart all your wishes, and to provoke me, seems to be his chief aim; if you are going out, he has reasons, which he does not choose to favour us with, for insisting upon your staying at home, and so *vice versa.* Well, I can only say, you are the best of wives; and I agree, that complaining would not mend the matter, since even your excellent father, for whom I have the highest esteem, would only make bad worse, were he to interfere. I only wish a bad temper was a sufficient plea upon which to ground divorces. As to Augustus, he is so gingle-pated, he often provokes me; but he is good tempered to a fault, as I know he lets himself be imposed upon continually. That is not a failing of Mr. Mirvan's; they must be cunning who can overreach him; and I agree he possesses all the talents the world

give

give him credit for; but, like many more such lordly beings, he does not display them at [illegible] e."

Emily [illegible] made [illegible] es laughed at her false friend's b[illegible]ing hi[illegible]; at others strove to defend Marcus, who became daily more difficult to please, and more tyrannical in his commands.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER VII.

We shall not pretend to detail the continual petty provocations to which the deceived Emily now became a victim, since though continually thwarted almost in [illegible] wishes, to the world, nay, even to Mr. Harland, Marcus appeared properly attentive to his wife, and most fascinating to his acquaintance. As her being a nurse confined her very much to home, Marcus gave frequent dinner-parties, for reasons best

best known to himself, when he did the honours of his house with such captivating politeness, amusing every o[illegible]y his fascinating conversation, w[illegible]ould suit to every taste, and whe[illegible]sed to display his really brilliant talents, he delighted all his hearers.

> " He was the very joy of all that saw him,
> Form'd to delight, to love, and to persuade:
> Impassive spirits, and angelic natures
> Might have been charm'd, like yielding human weakness,
> Stoop'd from their heaven, and listen'd to his talking."

Even the sometimes-wretched Emily was surprised into admiration, when he chose to render himself agreeable, and did ample justice to his unrivalled talents. In the House of Commons he was ever attended to by the opposite party; even they allowed him to possess all the graces of eloquence, and declared that he often made the *worst appear the better reason:* need we, therefore, be surprised at his being able to govern his father and mother, at his contriving to appear an excel-

lent

lent husband to Mr. Harland, at the good-tempered Augustus (who now often had recourse to him, when any temporary difficulties made him feel the want of cash) thinking him a sincere friend, since even Edward hardly knew whether he ought not to look up to the very man whose character he was unable to define? To cousin Jane, as he generally styled Mrs. Augustus Harland, he alone display-ed himself in his real colours—to her alone did he stand confessed an arch hypo-crite; yet even she was only one of his more prized puppets—she dare only speak, act, nay, think, as he desired; she was never to treat him with familiarity in mixed company; in short, she had so many parts assigned her by this wily tempter, that there were moments when she really wished to break the chains he had thrown over her; but he had always sufficient art to keep her in thraldom; and as she felt she was of consequence to him, and flattered herself he was as much

 in

in her power as she knew she was in his, she consoled herself with the hopes of revenge, should he ever dare to throw her off.

Meanwhile the amiable Emily was tormented by the ill-natured sarcasms of this much-admired man, who affected to hold her solid judgment and real talents in the greatest contempt, often declaring he was astonished at his blindness, in having selected a woman, whose baby-face was her sole recommendation, who had neither rank nor connexion to recommend her.

"But my father had money, Mr. Mirvan," replied the thoroughly provoked wife; "else, I dare believe, I might have escaped your notice."

Such a reproach was not borne very patiently by the vindictive Marcus, who retorted so violently, being, for a wonder, completely off his guard, that he effectually silenced the wretched Emily, since he barely stopped short of manual chastisement; and his unmanly threats, and gross language respecting her family, had

had such an effect upon her, that he was, perforce, obliged to cease to terrify the victim of his now ungovernable passion.

Mrs. Harland was hastily summoned to the agitated wife, and she so soothed her dear friend, and seemed to enter so sincerely into all her feelings, that she certainly prevented Mr. Mirvan from standing confessed to his servants for an unfeeling monster; and as she made some concessions for him, and he declared he was in liquor when he so far forgot himself, Emily felt it necessary to appear to believe his assertions; therefore peace was once more proclaimed in Dover-street.

The young Marcus Edward had been a sufferer from his mother's terror and subsequent agitation, and this her kind husband made a plea for her weaning the child. Since she had been a nurse, they had occupied adjoining but separate apartments, and of this he now chose to complain; and when he had declared his will, Emily knew there was no appeal; feel-

 ing,

ing, she was convinced, he did not possess, though he declared that the health of his darling boy should not suffer to gratify her caprice; she therefore merely observed, that the child was but four months old, and requested he would consult any medical man before he obliged her to wean him.

He was not to be taken by surprise; she now found, to her increasing regret, he had already done so, and the family physician had strongly urged the measure. Fine lady-mothers never made good nurses, the doctor had told him, and as the boy had suffered from her folly, it was highly proper to prevent a repetition of what might cost him his life—thus blaming poor Emily for the agitation and hysterics into which his brutal treatment had thrown her; and as she felt aware, that if she ventured to insist upon her privilege as a mother, or to apply to lady Delmont, she should only render Marcus more determined; therefore, to Mrs. Harland alone did

did she disclose her feelings; that lady had the policy to endeavour to reason her into a prompt compliance, though she declared Marcus was an unfeeling monster. —"However, in your place," she went on, "I would comply upon these terms—require the dear boy to be sent into the country, to Violet Bank, for example; that is within so easy a distance of London, that we can see the child often, and your husband dare not object to so reasonable a plan."

Emily was pleased with the notion, and, to her great surprise, Marcus made no serious objection to the proposal, observing, that the excellent woman who had nursed him resided at Mortlake, and to her he should intrust the child. Now, before he removed the boy, he thought it necessary to mention the matter to Mr. Harland, to whom he lamented the necessity of thus sending the child from under his mother's eye; but the fact was, Emily was not strong enough to continue to

 suckle

suckle him; she was growing very thin, lady Delmont had remarked, and was become so nervous and hysterical, that both she and the child must be sufferers, were they to continue together.

Mr. Harland was completely duped, and very much approved of his grandson's being removed to Mortlake.

Mrs. Monkwell, the proposed nurse, was therefore immediately sent for, that she might become acquainted with the child previous to its removal.

Emily, now her father had approved of her husband's plans, had ceased to object to them, and even received Mrs. Monkwell very kindly; she was a motherly, good-looking, loquacious old woman, who was not a little proud of having officiated as nurse to lord Exmore and Mr. Mirvan, and who hoped to give as good an account of her young charge: suffice it to say, that Emily was persuaded to dine at Clapham, as she must be satisfied with leaving Mrs. Monkwell in charge; and during

during her absence, the baby and its immediate attendants were sent to Mortlake with Mrs. Monkwell, to "spare the mother's feelings," said Marcus, who had not accompanied his wife to her father's; how far this precaution proved useful may be guessed, since the unfortunate young mother was seized with a fever the night after her child was removed, which threatened to baffle the skill of the first physicians London could boast.

Whatever hopes Mr. Mirvan might entertain of being thus released from the wretched victim of his avarice, he played his part so well, that he completely blinded the world of fashion, who thought him a most excellent husband, at the very time he might almost have been deemed the murderer of his wife.

Mr. Harland was so constant a visitor in Dover-street, during his daughter's illness, that much as Marcus was upon his guard, the old gentleman feared he was not the kind husband he wished to appear;

pear; and as it was agreed that Mrs. Mirvan's illness arose as much from grief for the removal of the child as from various natural causes, all connected with the departure of her son, the merchant felt both shocked and grieved at having sanctioned the measure. Mrs. Harland, however, proved, as usual, of the utmost use to her cousin Marcus, whom she represented as almost broken-hearted to his father-in-law, declaring, that he now seriously regretted having proposed that Emily should wean her child. In short, she talked so well, and made herself so useful in the sick-room, that, if the old gentleman felt rather displeased with his son-in-law, he was perfectly the dupe of his daughter-in-law; and thanks to her excellent constitution and gentle disposition, Mrs. Mirvan recovered, to dash to the ground a variety of ambitious plans of her husband, who had already seen himself, in imagination, united to a lady, who, to very great political connexions, added an immense fortune, and

and who had appeared to notice this popular favourite; of course, his present wife was not likely to rise in his estimation by the comparison. However, though he now declared to *cousin Jane* that old Harland was a silly proser, Augustus half a fool, and Edward a mere cypher on the wrong side of the unit, he contrived to reinstate himself in the old gentleman's good graces, by taking his wife, as soon as her physicians permitted, down to Mortlake, where, by way of aiding her convalescence, he left her to the care of Mrs. Monkwell and Mrs. Harland; and as she was now convinced that her son was taken every proper care of, she returned to town, much amended in health, and much happier in mind; and while it suited Marcus's plans to suffer her to remain unmolested, she enjoyed a sort of negative happiness, and Mr. Harland was almost convinced that her husband had really been actuated by affection, when he had required her to wean the boy, and he was strengthened in

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this idea by Augustus, who, without being aware that the notion had been instilled into his ductile mind by his wife, declared, that though the experiment had nearly proved fatal to his sister, she was so nervous, and so hysterical, while she was a nurse, that he should, like Marcus, have urged the removal of the child.

Edward alone did not give his brother-in-law any credit for having endangered his beloved sister's life; to him Marcus had not thought it worth his while to play the hypocrite; he had therefore formed a much better judgment of his character than the world had ever done, but he prudently kept his opinion to himself, contenting himself with rendering his beloved sister every service in his power, even to visiting his infant nephew once or twice a-week, to satisfy her mind respecting his being taken as much care of, when she was absent, as when she was present; and as he was very generous to Mrs. Monkwell, the

sagacious old lady never mentioned his visits to Mr. Mirvan, when she had occasion to address him, or saw him at Violet Bank.

CHAPTER VIII.

While Edward Harland was thus endeavouring to render his sister more comfortable, Augustus, the *gingle-pated*, as his wife termed him, had so involved himself, that his creditors becoming impatient, threatened to have recourse to more severe measures than a mere execution in his house; and as he did not possess the privilege of a member, he began to entertain the most serious fears for his personal liberty. Mrs. Harland declared he was the most extravagant of mortals, to have run through the handsome fortune his father had given him in little better than three

three years, not conceiving that her own want of care and attention in the household department had at all increased his difficulties; and as he was aware that he was devoted to a dice-box, he did not retort upon her as he might have done; indeed, in addition to his own debts, he had become answerable for some of his friends, who had prudently *crossed the water*, to avoid even his remonstrances. What was to be done? Marcus had, he declared, when applied to, assisted him to the utmost of his abilities; and it certainly appeared that he was already deeply indebted to this relative, who now observed, that so much of his money was locked up for his wife and child, he really could not spare any more, except upon better security than Augustus could give, but advised Mrs. Harland to persuade Emily to address her father in their behalf; they must sink the gambling debts upon the old gentleman, and make out as good a story as they could.

Mrs.

Mrs. Harland, who felt assured that she should be provided for, whether Augustus sunk or swam, promised to interest Emily in their behalf; and by way of a blind to the old gentleman, Marcus was made to appear the principal creditor. He made a great merit of suffering this good-tempered, thoughtless young man, thus, as he said, to make him his tool, which he merely agreed to, upon condition that should Mr. Harland come forward, as was hoped and expected, that he would suffer him, Marcus, to receive half of his salary in future, for the use of his wife, who must be brought to want if he was not more prudent.

Augustus, who merely sought present relief, and who had involved himself by never attending to the future, readily agreed to all his proposals; therefore, properly instructed, Mrs. Harland, with due precaution, broke the matter to the much-abused Emily; and as she had ever been the dupe of this plotting woman, she believed

lieved all she said, and thought she, at least, was much to be pitied, though she declared Augustus must be insane to engage his credit for more than he was worth.

"I shall not attempt to excuse him, my dear sister—so you see good-temper, when carried to excess, is a very great failing. You never need fear being ruined by your husband, and you know the old proverb, *a fat sorrow is better than a lean one;* however, if you will but represent our deplorable case to your father, I think he will not suffer us to sink."

Emily, who would have scorned to confide her own sorrows, or even wants, had she known any, to her indulgent parent, promised to address him in their behalf; and that very evening, with the full, nay gracious permission of Marcus, she drove to Clapham, and had leave to spend a few days there, Mr. Mirvan desiring her to assure the old gentleman, that had he been the only creditor, Augustus would not

have

have been in dread of a prison. Emily gave him just as much credit as he deserved, merely expressing her real surprise, when she understood how large a sum he had advanced for her imprudent brother.

Mr. Harland was shocked when she disclosed her errand, declaring, that no fortune would prove sufficient to keep this silly youth out of a gaol, if he thus made himself security for every extravagant fool who applied to him. He had done as much for him as his circumstances prudently admitted; he had another son, and he should not lessen his share to minister to the follies of this *gentleman*. However, if Augustus was very candid with him, he might once more set him upon his legs. Not to dwell upon this subject, suffice it to say, that, thanks to Emily's and Edward's representations, Mr. Harland liquidated his elder son's debts; and by the very particular desire of the worthy Edward, he paid Marcus both principal and interest, and made no inquiries as to

to the how, the why, or the wherefore, he had, so contrary to his general disposition, behaved so kindly to this extravagant *gentleman*, who was obliged to give up housekeeping and content himself with a good lodging, since, when his debts were all paid, he had very little remaining, his salary excepted.

As if to reward the generous Edward for his liberality towards his brother, and for his wish to promote his beloved sister's happiness, his mother's brother, who had long been settled at St Petersburgh, and who was considered as the richest merchant belonging to the factory, died, leaving his nephew, and only relative, his whole fortune, merely requiring him to continue in business for the ten ensuing years, that he might retire, as he had hoped to have done, the richest private subject in Europe.

Most grateful was Mr. Harland senior, when he learnt his younger son's good fortune; and most truly did he rejoice that

that he had not yet taken him into partnership, as it was necessary that Edward should immediately proceed to Russia. He took a most affectionate leave of his sister, and felt more than his former contempt for his elegant brother-in-law, upon being received by him with the greatest politeness. The *clerk* was quite forgotten in the *rich Russia merchant*, since, unasked, Marcus declared he should visit St. Petersburgh during his stay there, and hoped he would often write to his sister, as the distance would render his letters doubly valuable.

Edward did not express his feelings, for his sister's sake rather hoping that his very unexpected good fortune might increase her happiness, since self-interest appeared to be the *primum mobile* of Marcus Mirvan, who had been duly appreciated by the unassuming young merchant. To Augustus he was very kind, making him a noble pecuniary present, and desiring him, in future, to address him, should he

be

be again involved; at the same time giving him some excellent advice for his future conduct, and assuring him, that he should request his father would divide his remaining fortune between him and Emily, whom he recommended to his particular care, hinting, in confidence, that he much feared she was not so happy as she deserved.

Augustus, who appeared truly grateful, hoped better things; and much as she regretted her beloved brother's absence, Emily rejoiced at his good fortune, which Marcus most bitterly envied him, telling the earl, that he now felt convinced the capricious jade was blind, since she thus showered her blessings upon a mere plodding clerk, and left him to work his way upwards with the greatest difficulty.

Lord Delmont thought he was very handsomely provided for, recapitulating what he and Mr. Harland had done for him.

The haughty Marcus felt offended, and

possibly

possibly, had he not, immediately after Edward's departure, been promoted to a much more lucrative and honourable situation, he would have joined the banners of opposition, since, at every risk, he was resolved to be of consequence to his party. While he was displaying his arrogance upon being thus noticed by those in power, much to the annoyance of his wife and *cousin Jane*, who frequently suffered from his increasing pride, the failure of one of the first houses in Hamburgh proved of very serious consequence to Mr. Harland, who declared he could not be sufficiently thankful that his son Edward had been so amply provided for, ere this check was put to his credit, since all he should be able to save would have been but a poor provision for his younger son.

Marcus, who hoped the merchant had taken the alarm prematurely, offered his services, even to visit Hamburgh, if the old gentleman thought his presence would prove of any service; or should he address the

the British resident at the Hans Towns in his behalf? in short, he would have performed impossibilities to have secured to himself the wreck of Mr. Harland's fortune; but this time the merchant was not his dupe.

Edward had thought it his duty to be very sincere before he left England; and his sister at the mercy of an unfeeling, haughty tyrant, for such he was convinced this much-admired man was, he had therefore rather opened his father's eyes, but who had, by his advice, resolved to remain apparently blind, so long as his doing so might be serviceable to his daughter; he therefore very civilly thanked his son-in-law for the interest he took in his concerns, observing, that it was fortunate he had a most sincere friend already upon the Continent. Edward had been so long his clerk, that he was more competent than any body to settle this unpleasant business; to him he should send an express, and every necessary document to establish

blish his claims, and he made no doubt of every thing being done which human prudence or foresight could suggest; he should therefore calmly wait the event, since, should the worst come to the worst, he should be able to pay every one twenty shillings in the pound, and have enough left to maintain a decent appearance; and with these assurances, Marcus was obliged to be satisfied; but his wife was doomed to hear daily of her father's improvidence. He might well shew lenity to Augustus, when he was allowing his correspondents to speculate at his expence. Who, but him, would not have taken Edward, when he became of age, into his firm? then this business would have been of no consequence—Edward would have shared the loss, which would, in that case, have been hardly felt by Mr. Harland; now was it likely this man, who was rolling in money, would give himself any trouble about a business, from which he would not expect

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to derive any advantage? he was not such a Quixote.

Emily made very little answer, merely observing, that situated as her father now was, she presumed he would advise her to relinquish the allowance he had hitherto made her for pinmoney.

"I know you, or rather I, must make the offer, but it will be very paltry in your father if he accepts it; he might as well require me to refund your fortune."

Emily heard him in silence; and as Marcus hoped and expected, the offer he made, though in his most insinuating manner, was proudly rejected by the noble-minded merchant, at whose folly his son-in-law amused himself with *cousin Jane*, who declared, if nothing turned up trump for them, she should recommend Augustus to endeavour to obtain a consulship in Russia, as he might thus continue in the sight and memory of the rich merchant. Marcus, however, soon ceased to

to envy, or even to think of Edward Harland, since lord Exmore having fallen into declining health since his severe fever, departed this life before he had been nominated to any permanent employment. As he died at Vienna, the earl merely regretted the amazing expence of having the corpse brought to England; but as it must be done, he made the best arrangements which circumstances admitted, and with due attention to etiquette, secretly hoping that Marcus, for whom he had done so much, would not prove so averse as Edwin had done to felling some timber which, the earl declared, groaned for the axe. Now possibly, had his deceased son given into his plans, he might have been more liberal; as it was, they had been upon very distant terms for the last twelve months.

Never had Marcus Mirvan felt so happy as when certain that he was *bona fide* viscount Exmore; to what might he not now aspire? of course, he should soon be

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one of the secretaries of state, and as that would afford his talents great scope, he hardly knew whether he should wish to be premier; had he but remained single a few years longer, how he might have married: whereas he was now united to the daughter of a half-broken merchant, and more than half her fortune was secured to their son. From her connexion with the weak Augustus, he derived neither honour nor profit; indeed, it was more than probable he should, finally, have him and his wife to maintain. From Edward he entertained no expectations; he would probably marry, and whether or not, from him he should derive no advantage. In short, when to the world he appeared to be the most fortunate of men, he considered himself as very much to be pitied; and certainly his wife found herself every succeeding day more miserable, as upon her devoted head he vented the spleen which he dared not give way to in company.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

EDWARD *the prudent*, as cousin Jane had named him, now shewed himself the most affectionate and dutiful of sons; he hastened to Hamburgh, upon receipt of his father's letter, and from thence remitted him more money than sufficient to satisfy all the pressing demands which could be made upon his house, taking upon himself all the loss which might accrue from his German correspondent's failure.

Most grateful to the worthy merchant's feelings was this conduct of his younger son, which, in the pride of his heart, he boasted of to lord Delmont, since Edward had foreseen and provided for every emergency, even to providing a fund for the payment of his sister's pinmoney. Nor had he forgotten Augustus, though, by

way of putting a check upon his extravagance, the allowance he made him was merely during pleasure.

"You are a happy father," said the conscious earl, "but I hope and expect to derive equal comfort and satisfaction from my favourite Marcus; he will now have it in his power to display his regard for me, and I am convinced he will not be found wanting, when put to the test."

Mr. Harland assured him, he hoped he would not be disappointed; but to be very candid, he feared lord Exmore was, in every sense of the word, a man of the world.

The earl warmly debated this point—still they parted friends, as the merchant had not sunk under his misfortunes, as had been feared and expected.

As lord Exmore was now laid in the family vault, and every proper honour paid to his memory, the earl commenced his attack upon Marcus, and certainly convinced his son that he was no despicable

able orator where his interest was concerned. The felling of the timber would be of real benefit to the estate; and after what he had done for his beloved Marcus, he would not allow himself to doubt of his ready concurrence. He had, however, given Marcus credit for much more gratitude than he possessed, as he urged the probability of his having a family, Mr. Harland's comparative poverty, &c. &c. in excuse for putting a decided negative upon his father's proposals, who thus discovered, that this hitherto idolized son would not accede to even the most reasonable proposal for his immediate relief. He was very sorry the earl was so involved, but it was his duty not to impoverish his children, which he must do, were he to come into his lordship's plans. No one regretted more than himself the necessity of putting a negative upon his wishes, but he must put a curb upon his feelings—justice must take the lead of generosity: when his lordship took the matter into serious con-

 sideration,

sideration, he was convinced that he would approve of a denial, which was in direct opposition to his feelings.

The earl, with more patience than might have been expected, mentioned what Edward Harland had done, not only for his father but his family. Surely he was not less interested in his lordship's keeping up an appearance befitting to his rank, than the youth he used to look down upon as a mere clerk!

Marcus did not deny that much merit was due to the young merchant, but he was sure the elder Mr. Harland would never have required him to make away with his inheritance to benefit him. However, to convince the earl how much he wished to oblige him, he would suffer him to fell the timber, upon condition of his sharing the produce; and certainly, as he made it out, his lordship ought to think himself greatly obliged by this, as he deemed it, extorted concession, which he never would have made, had he not reflected,

reflected, that if he persevered in his refusal, his father might, though he could not sell his estates, greatly increase the heavy mortgages with which it was already burthened; and, possibly, had the same idea occurred to the earl, he would have rejected his proposal with disdain; as it was, he consented to his wishes, and thus matters were settled, not to their mutual satisfaction, for neither were pleased with the other; they however separated, to appearance greater friends than ever, but, in reality, merely united by their mutual interest. Still the earl spoke of his beloved Marcus in the highest terms to Mr. Harland, who was happy to hear that he had behaved so well, as a good son could not prove a very bad husband; little supposing that Emily had been a severe sufferer, from the ill-humour in which he returned from his father's house, after having been obliged to consent to the earl's plans for raising money.

Whether the shock the elder Mr. Harland

land had undergone, when he learnt the failure of the Hamburgh house, had hurt his constitution, we cannot pretend to say, but he was scarcely allowed to rejoice in the filial attachment of his younger son, ere an apoplectic stroke deprived him of existence.

Augustus, who had a very feeling heart, broke the matter with due caution to the unfortunate Emily, who now found herself entirely at the mercy of a tyrant, who, she knew, would be less than ever inclined to treat her with kindness, since he did stand in some awe of her father, and even of her brother Edward; but Augustus he held in thorough contempt, and merely tolerated upon account of his wife; therefore his interference would prove worse than useless; and, unfortunately, as she conceived, Mr. Harland had evinced, if not his dislike, his distrust of lord Exmore in his will. Having appointed two of his tried mercantile friends his executors, he left the one half of his property of

every

every denomination to his beloved son Edward; the other half, amounting to upwards of forty thousand pounds, he divided between Augustus and Emily, leaving hers in trust for her sole and separate use, and to be at her whole and sole disposal when she died.

Lord Exmore, though already rich enough to satisfy any reasonable man, was furious with his wretched wife, accusing her of having misrepresented him to her weak-brained father, who, he was certain, was in his dotage, else would he have left best part of his shattered fortune to a man rich enough to purchase half England? But that, absurd as it was, he could have forgiven; not so the insult of rendering his daughter independent. What could the executors think of him? they must suppose him an absolute tyrant! This was the return he met with for having offered his assistance when he was in difficulties.

Thus he ran on, Emily not even daring to

to defend her beloved father's memory. However, having sufficiently vented his spleen, where he dared give way to his odious disposition, he wrote a most elegant polite letter in reply to the executors' communications, declaring himself perfectly satisfied with the arrangements of the deceased, merely regretting that he had, notwithstanding their connexion, been so little acquainted with his character, as to have supposed such precautions necessary. To Augustus he used the same language, hinting that it might be as prudent were he to settle half the sum he had received upon his wife; but he did not find him inclined to follow his advice, since cousin Jane and him were become a very fashionable couple—they seldom quarrelled — indeed they did not spend much time together. Had he been a fond husband, he might have objected to her being so much with his sister—as it was, he thought their early friendship a very sufficient excuse. His father's bounty enabled

abled him once more to begin housekeeping on a moderate scale; and as Edward continued his allowance, they made a very genteel appearance, and Mrs. Harland continued the sworn friend of her now much-envied sister, who was daily exposed to the taunts and continued ill-humour of her disappointed husband.

Cousin Jane vowed he was an absolute bashaw, yet blaming her friend for feeling his insults, only wishing any relation of hers would render her as independant of Augustus; he might scold, taunt, or rave, she should merely shake her purse at him. —" So do not make yourself so miserable, because you are shackled to a tyrant. Pluck up a spirit, and bless God that he cannot control you in money matters. Oh that I could put my head upon your shoulders, when he is tormenting you, a base fellow! And what provokes me more than all, is to hear you spoken of with envy, and his pleasant lordship as a paragon."

Her

Her rattle rather amused her deceived friend, who believed her sincerely attached to her, and ready to do or say any thing to serve her; indeed, she frequently planned airings to Mortlake; and if, as often happened, her surly tyrant prevented Emily from going, cousin Jane would go alone, declaring "squire high and mighty should not shackle her movements," thus rendering herself almost necessary to Emily's comfort, who certainly amply recompensed her for her attention to her wishes.

The timber had been felled, and the money divided, as agreed upon; still Marcus continued dissatisfied; and the earl felt that he took more upon him than accorded with their relative situations, yet he could not quarrel with him. To lady Delmont he was the most (in appearance) affectionate of sons; she had some property at her own disposal, and it was besides to his interest to induce her to speak of him in the most flattering terms; and as she

she supposed his wife to be a mere milk-and-water girl, eat up with the vapours, and hardly producible in the world of fashion, she agreed he was very much to be pitied, in having acceded to his father's wishes, because the silly chit was the daughter of his plebeian friend; and as he always appeared attentively kind in public to the woman he almost trampled upon in private, the world of fashion considered him as a most excellent husband to a petted, silly, young woman, whose beauty was her sole recommendation.

Various were the plots and plans which were suggested and arranged by him and cousin Jane, who was the joint confident of both husband and wife; but nothing was resolved upon, though the viscount was determined to bring some one or other to bear ere the expiration of another twelvemonth, when his mother aroused all his evil propensities, by telling him, one morning, that the elegant countess

tess of Abberville, the rich widow, had mentioned him in terms of the most expressive approbation the evening before.

To be even noticed by this celebrated belle, who had just thrown off her last mourning, for a husband old enough to have been her father, and who had left her a very large jointure, and all his personal property, was of itself very flattering; but, if he understood his mother, he had been particularly distinguished by her. Of course, had he been at liberty, he might have hoped to have obtained her hand; and, with her fortune, and her connexions, to what might he not aspire! The first honours of the state would alone content him. He must strike a bold stroke; he could not suffer such an opportunity of towering among his fellows to escape. Cousin Jane must set her talents to work.

He was thus amusing himself, if planing mischief can be so considered, when Emily, Augustus,

Augustus, and cousin Jane, entered his study, to tell him they were going to Mortlake.

Emily had a child's hat and feathers in her hand, which she displayed, saying it was a present of the earl to his grandson.

To be interrupted when so very differently engaged, by the woman whom, but for fear of the consequences, he would hardly have scrupled to murder, and to hear of a child, whom he now began to dislike, since he might prove a bar to many of his future plans, was more than sufficient to ruffle a temper never under due control, when not in danger of exposing himself to the world. Without speaking, he rudely snatched the hat out of his wife's hand, and threw it upon the fire, asking her—"How she dare to break in upon him, when she knew he was engaged?"

Nor was he very civil to the really surprised Augustus, who, with more spirit than he had ever evinced, spoke his mind with

with manly freedom, till, provoked beyond endurance, he swore—"His wife should not go then, if ever again, to Mortlake."

Thunderstruck by such unexpected violence, the wretched Emily burst into tears.

Cousin Jane, who could, as she told her friend (and for once she spoke truth), have boxed his ears, declared he was mad, asking him whether he meant to beat them as well as abuse them?

Had poor Emily thus retorted, we will not say what might have proved the consequence; as it was, cousin Jane's serious remonstrance brought him to his senses, and, with the duplicity now become habitual to him, he at once smoothed his brow, and with well-affected regret he declared that he deserved her reproach; but he had been so ruffled by a very serious disappointment that morning, that he really was half-insane when they so unfortunately afforded him an opportunity,

ty, certainly not an excuse, for displaying his irritability; making the most handsome excuses to the still-trembling Emily, and requesting Augustus would pardon his silly childish behaviour.—"I have to thank you, my dear cousin, for having so properly corrected my folly. Pray do you purchase a more elegant hat for the dear boy; and do you, my dear Emily, accompany your brother and sister to Mortlake, and kiss our Marcus for his truly penitent father."

The almost broken-hearted, and quite broken-spirited wife meekly acquiesced, though his violence had so overset her, that she had much rather have remained at home.

Mrs. Harland, who saw how unlikely she was to derive any pleasure from their proposed airing, and who was as anxious as the viscount himself could be not to blazon his failings to the world, interposed—"Well, since you have recalled your certainly strayed senses, lord Exmore,

more, I will oblige you by making the purchase you desire; but, as my poor Emily cannot encounter your silly bluster with the same indifference I should, since I am not so easily frightened, we will postpone our visit to Mortlake till to-morrow."

The now complaisant Marcus requested they would please themselves, when, pleading urgent business, he left them, or, it is more than probable, that his assumed mildness would have given place to his real disposition.

Never had Emily been so thoroughly alarmed by her husband's violence; his excuses were even more unpleasant than his rage, as she felt too certain of having become an object of indifference, if not of hatred to him.—" Surely," said she, to cousin Jane, " any thing would be preferable to continuing to reside with such a man. I can really hardly fancy my life in safety under his roof. Thanks to my benevolent father, I have enough to support

port me and my child in affluence. If he would but allow me to retire to Mortlake with my son, I would never call upon him for a shilling."

"He is a wretch, I agree, and you know I did not spare him; but I fear me he will never consent to your immuring yourself in the country; but let me alone for planning some scheme that may procure you at least a respite from his tyranny. When things are at the worst, they are sure to mend; and should he continue to give way to his vile temper, I should dread his firing the house, or some other wickedness. However, compose your spirits—fretting can do no good; trust to my management; Augustus will join in any plan for your benefit, so leave every thing to us."

Emily had no other resource, and felt truly grateful to her artful friend, to whom alone she could impart her grievances.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

In consequence of this ebullition of the viscount's rage, and Emily's secret resolves, which, of course, he learned from cousin Jane, it was settled between the precious pair, that the wretched wife should be allowed to visit some watering-place, with her wily friend, and his lordship's spy. It had not been decided whither they should bend their steps, when the viscount learned, by chance, that captain Murray was returned to England, and was with his regiment at Southampton. He hastened to impart the intelligence to cousin Jane, who entered into all his schemes with an alacrity agreeable to her disposition, merely making her own terms, should she succeed to their wishes, declaring that she made a point of conscience of

of reconciling the former lovers,

"And I think you have given Emily a surfeit of matrimony, that she will very willingly break her chains."

"I am not quite so sanguine; she has very good principles; you must be very much upon your guard—should she once suspect you, our plot will be defeated."

"Leave me alone to manage matters; seconded as I shall be, by a fine young fellow, and by her own inclinations, she must be more than mortal if she does not enable your lordship to address lady Abberville, who, by the way, I suspect is no conjurer; but she is a countess, rich, and the fashion—what more is requisite to render her husband happy? So now we understand each other, do you prepare the way, and leave me to second you."

A week was not suffered to elapse ere lord Exmore carelessly asked Emily, while sitting after dinner with her and Mrs. Harland—"Whether she should like to spend a few weeks at Southampton?

nquire," he continued, "I have e loan of a very pleasant villa there ered me by a friend, who had hired it for the season; but a death in the family has altered their plans; so if you and Jane have no objection, I will accept his offer. I will go down with you; and either Augustus or I will visit you once a-week, as I cannot, nor can he, be long absent."

"I dare say we shall be able to exist without you," resumed the laughing Jane: "but, seriously, if Emily is agreeable, I shall delight in change of scene and air."

"I can have no objection," replied lady Exmore; "I only wish my dear little Marcus could be of the party."

"That cannot be so well arranged," rejoined the viscount, "as madam nurse is not fond of moving; besides, the child is much better off at our villa than he could be at any of the small abodes so styled near watering-places, where the sitting-rooms are closets, and the sleeping-apartments

ments cupboards. A little show is all that is required in those little mansions; and as people merely go for change of scene, it is all very well."

Emily agreed there was justice in the remark, pleased to find that her proposal had been so gently refused; and it was finally settled, that the party should leave town the following Saturday.

Emily visited Mortlake *ad interim*, and made Mrs. Monkwell a very handsome present, who promised to pay more than usual attention to her young charge during his mother's absence.

A proper, though small suite, having preceded them into Hampshire, the party reached Southampton at a late dinner-hour on the appointed day, when Emily, to her surprise, found her habitation an elegant and spacious villa, commanding a most beautiful prospect, and much better furnished than such hired habitations generally are; therefore, had her child been

with her, she would have felt comparatively happy.

Lord Exmore declared he was very happy their borrowed habitation was likely to prove so comfortable an abode, observing—"That he had always preferred Southampton to the more frequented watering-places;" and, as he was upon his good behaviour, the evening passed off very pleasantly.

The next morning, while Emily was admiring the prospect from her dressing-room window, she saw two officers slowly pacing the adjoining high road, whose regimentals brought her first lover to her recollection. Could it be his regiment which was stationed there? Well, suppose it was, what was captain Murray now to her? At all events, her early romance was unknown to lord Exmore, and Jane would gladly assist her in avoiding the ingrate; upon her discretion she felt assured she might depend; yet she could

could have wished chance had not thrown her again into the vicinity of this man. "Had Marcus known my early predilection for him," she mentally exclaimed, "Southampton would have been the last place he would have brought me to. But why should I revert to that hated past? Murray may have left the regiment, or not be with it; and what can it signify to me? should he be here, we shall meet as strangers; he neither is, nor ever can be any thing to me."

When she joined the party in the breakfast-room, Augustus had much to say in praise of Southampton. Mrs. Harland joined in his encomiums. Lord Exmore only regretted his stay must, of necessity, be so short, proposing their going to church, as no man attended more to the forms of religion than himself.

Emily excused herself, under the plea of a slight headache; for which Mrs. Harland prescribed perfect quietude and the sofa, adding—"I shall accompany the

gentlemen to church, that you may devote our absence to silence and repose."

Emily made no objection, and the carriage being ready, saw them depart with pleasure, convinced that Jane would mention captain Murray, should she see him. He might be married; and what could it signify to her? Still she felt restless, till the return of the party; a sort of indefinable dread had taken possession of her mind.—"Yet surely," she continually repeated to herself, as if it did not admit of a doubt, "I may depend upon Jane's discretion!"

When they returned, the gentlemen, as the day was covered in, set out for a walk; when cousin Jane, with well-affected surprise, told her friend—"I have seen captain Murray; he was in the next pew, with several other officers. I suppose I looked at him rather steadfastly, since he did make me a stiff bow when we left the church. Marcus did not remark him. Augustus inquired who he was. I mentioned

tioned his name, merely saying it was many years since we had met."

Emily now mentioned having seen the officers in the morning, and agreed they must treat their former friend with distant civility, should chance throw them in each other's way; and having thus determined, the wary Jane suffered the subject to drop, wisely believing that Emily's own reflections, and the comparisons she might draw between lord Exmore and the very handsome officer, would be in favour of her scheme, since, though when he wished to appear to advantage, Marcus shone unrivalled, his insolent demeanour and overbearing temper had rendered his wife totally regardless of his personal beauty.

The next morning, as agreed, the gentlemen left them. Cousin Jane openly rejoiced at their departure, since now they should be at liberty to pursue their own inclination, very adroitly dwelling upon the tyrannical disposition of Marcus, declaring—

ing—"She often laughed to see how completely he managed Augustus, whose indolence suffered his lordship to render him quite a puppet. Edward has ten times more spirit; and if you were to appear as indifferent as I do, when he gives way to his amiable temper, he would cease to storm and rave, since, if he does not create fear, he may be sure he does contempt."

Emily wished she possessed more spirit, though she feared her lord would knock her down should she exert it.

"That might be unpleasant, and 'tis probable; but then you might swear the peace against him."

Emily shuddered at the bare idea.

Having sat late, lady Exmore made it late the next morning before she joined her companion, who had been taking a solitary stroll she told her; but the moment the servants were dismissed, she exclaimed—"Do you know, Emily, I very unexpectedly stumbled upon your *quondam*

dam admirer. I declare I do not know how I felt when he addressed me; so many pleasant past scenes came across me, that I stood like one bewildered while he was addressing me, till he rivetted my attention, by requesting me to explain why you had ceased corresponding with him, appearing to consider me as the cause. You may believe I did not very tamely hear myself almost accused of treachery; but I shall not repeat all he said, since it is now of little consequence to you whether he is innocent or guilty of the neglect we laid to his charge; though, if there is truth in man, I must acquit him; and he agreed with me in supposing that my worthy old aunt, God rest her soul! must have intercepted his letters addressed to me, and bribed the servants to give her any I might send to the post. We can no otherwise account for their not having come to hand. Ay, I see, that like me, you acquit the captain; we can do no more, since, as I told him, all things con-

sidered, I almost wished this explanation had not taken place; but he declares that he rejoices at such an opportunity being afforded him of clearing his character; and as he wishes very much to see you, why I have given him leave to call upon *me* this evening; to have refused his request, would have made him fancy himself of much more consequence to you than I know him to be; indeed, it would be excess of prudery in you, and have been absurd in me, to refuse him admittance."

Emily was not absolutely the dupe of this plausible reasoning, and blamed her friend very much for placing her in so awkward a predicament.

Jane declared, that had she supposed she had not considered captain Murray with the same indifference she did, she would have forbid him the house, instead of inviting him. "I can write him to that effect now. Since I have done the mischief, suffer me to pay the penalty."

She had touched upon the right chord,

as

as Emily would not allow her to prevent his coming, since she should never forget that she was a wife and a mother. Her early acquaintance with captain Murray had been of so transient a nature, she should probably never have bestowed a thought upon him, had she been fortunate in her choice.

"Of course you would not; and we may now receive him as an acquaintance, just by way of convincing him that we consider him in no other light."

"But should lord Exmore disapprove of our receiving any officer?"

"Do you suppose that he shall dictate to me who I am to receive? No, no, the captain is my visitor; and I think it will be much more proper to receive him openly, than to suffer him to waylay us whenever we walk out—that might have an odd appearance, even to Augustus."

Suffice it to say, that she succeeded to the extent of her wishes, since, having overruled all poor Emily's scruples, she

made no doubt of the ultimate success of all her future plans.

The captain came at the appointed time, and he certainly made his innocence appear so evident to Emily, that, for the first time in her life, she suffered a doubt of Jane's sincerity to enter her mind; yet why should she have acted so base a part? and certainly she accounted very plausibly for the cessation of their correspondence; but so many past circumstances now rushed upon her mind, that she feared she had been purposely misled by her artful friend. Suffice it to say, that, in consequence of a hint of his beloved Emily, the captain did not repeat his visits; but as the ladies generally walked unattended, he frequently joined them; and as Mrs. Harland proved a most convenient friend to both, though Emily was almost convinced that she had been the means of breaking off their early correspondence, still she could not quarrel with her; and captain Murray, who had hinted to lady Exmore that it

it had been whispered she was attached to the viscount, thought she was only following the golden rule, since, by appearing blind to their increasing intimacy, she might expect to be equally favoured by her sister-in-law: in short, we regret to say, that Emily's guardian angel deserted her; since, though she certainly had excuses for her dereliction from virtue which few women can urge, since she was absolutely led into temptation, still we shall not pretend to extenuate her error, as she knew and felt she was doing wrong, when she suffered cousin Jane to laugh her out of her prudish scruples. Surely it was absurd to deny herself the pleasure of talking over past times with an early friend; was not she always present when they were together? the world must be censorious indeed, if they ventured to arraign their conduct; and, fortunately, as the poor deluded Emily thought, lord Exmore was obliged to attend his mother into the North, and having appointed Augustus

Augustus his deputy in many things, he was prevented from visiting Southampton.

Captain Murray was not without his suspicions that some scheme was in agitation, which, it was hoped, he would forward, as he neither was, nor ever had been, Mrs. Harland's dupe, whom, he felt assured, had purposely thrown herself in his way; still he could not find in his heart to do more than request Emily would be upon her guard against further treachery: therefore, thus drawn on imperceptibly by an amiable man, her first love, and a most artful friend, we grieve to add, that in an unfortunate moment, lady Exmore privately admitted her lover to a nightly conference in her own room, and there forgot that she was a wife and a mother, and thus laid the foundation for years of remorse, if not of absolute misery.

Mrs. Harland, who had, like the serpent of old, seen and gloried in the success of her plans, did not suffer the guilty pair to escape unpunished, since, while

Emily

Emily was bitterly weeping in her lover's arms, she burst into the apartment, followed by her own maid and her ladyship's servant out of livery, exclaiming, as she held up her wax taper, having undrawn the curtains—"Well, this is more than I expected to discover. Connor," her maid, "aroused me, assuring me there were thieves in the house, which induced me to summon Johnson; however, I believe we are in no danger of having our throats cut—the captain came upon a very different errand," instantly retreating, leaving the wretched Emily speechless with horror and surprise.

Captain Murray having rather soothed her, now said—"My beloved—my own Emily, are you not now convinced that this vile woman first separated us, and has now led us to expose ourselves to her machinations; she has long been upon the watch for this moment; those two servants have been in her confidence, and they expect to be rewarded by lord Exmore.

more. I now see through the whole plan, too late to defeat their villany; but as this discovery will certainly not long remain a secret, let us immediately leave this house, for I swear by——"

Emily requested he would make no rash vows, which would only render her still more wretched—"Not," she added, "that I regret the certainty of being separated from a man who has convinced me that he has long wished for such a termination to our ill-fated connexion."

Again did the captain endeavour to reconcile her to herself, since she did not accuse him, but severely blamed herself, and deeply lamented her having yielded to temptation.

As she would not hear of leaving the house in his company, it was finally settled that he should be the bearer of a few lines to the only surviving relative of her late mother, who had kept her father's house during his lifetime, and who now resided in a small house at Tooting, whither

ther lady Exmore wished to seek a refuge, admitting Mrs. Wellsdown would condescend to receive her, since no one could more severely condemn the unfortunate Emily than she did herself. She would not suffer the captain either to palliate or extenuate her guilt; she was a wife and a mother, and had disgraced both characters; indeed, so sincere was her grief, that the captain was half afraid to leave her to her own reflections, till she assured him that she would endeavour to compose her spirits, and to fortify her mind to bear the evils she had brought upon herself, while he swore to go himself in search of Mrs. Wellsdown, who, he was certain, would prove far more lenient towards her errors than she was inclined to do; and thus these unfortunate lovers parted, who had been thus, a second time, the dupes of the scheming and wanton Jane Harland.

CHAPTER XI.

EMILY chose to confine herself to her own apartment till she learned the result of her application to Mrs. Wellsdown, who, she flattered herself, would not forsake her in her distress. Her own woman, who was sincerely attached to her, now ventured to hint that she was convinced it had long been in agitation to take her and captain Murray by surprise, sincerely wishing she dared have taken the liberty to have put her upon her guard.

"I cannot blame you for not having done so," replied her lady, "as I might have felt offended, when you would only have wished to serve me. I need not tell you what will be the result of my criminal imprudence; it therefore rests with you whether you will attach yourself to my

my fallen fortunes, or seek another situation."

Armiger hastily declared she would follow her dear mistress to the world's end, if required, readily setting about packing their respective wardrobes; while she was thus employed, and lady Exmore was humbling herself before her Heavenly Father, Mrs. Harland's exultation, at having so well succeeded in drawing her into the snare which had been so ingeniously devised for her ruin, rather subsided—nay, before the breakfast-hour, she had began to fear she had been too precipitate; but she consoled herself with the hope that lady Exmore would certainly endeavour to purchase her silence, and that of her confidents; and should she prove very liberal in her offers, why she might come into her plans, as she should always have it in her power to extort money from her when it suited her purpose; thus half resolving to deceive her favourite Marcus, who might, in the long run, forget

get his obligations towards her. She did not expect lady Exmore would appear at breakfast, nor was she surprised at her merely admitting her own woman into her dressing-room, to whom she applied to know at what hour her ladyship meant to dine.

Armiger could not resolve the question; she had merely received orders not to admit any one into her ladyship's own apartments.

"I assure you, Mrs. Armiger, I sincerely feel for her, poor soul! and am really very sorry I suffered Connor's fears to infect me; pray request she would admit me, if only for five minutes; I am sure she would be relieved by many things which I could suggest."

In reply to these friendly hints, Armiger merely brought her a very cool message, importing, that her lady wished to continue alone and unmolested.

This roused all the floating gall in cousin Jane's composition, who now sat down

to

to write an exaggerated statement of poor Emily's errors to her tyrant, to whom alone she now looked for proper remuneration. She was thus employed, when Mrs. Wellsdown stopped at the door in a hack chaise and four.

The moment this truly excellent woman received her young relation's letter, even before she had heard the captain's very simple tale, she had decided to go in search of her. She had promised the late Mr. Harland to consider his daughter as hers, should her protection be ever required, or prove needful to lady Exmore; therefore, though grieving for what had occurred, she was upon the road in an hour after she had seen the captain.

Armiger, who had been upon the watch, was at the chaise-door the moment it stopped, and according to the orders she had received, she immediately led Mrs. Wellsdown to her mistress.

Mrs. Harland, who was, of course, acquainted with this worthy woman, was thunder-

thunderstruck at her apropos arrival at Southampton. "Could she have learnt the recent occurrences?" was Mrs. Harland's mental query; that seemed impossible—therefore she would point out the necessity of conciliating *cousin Jane;* but the moment was gone by—she would no longer extend the olive branch—no, no! madam Emily should now suffer for her recent airs! While she was thus determining to withstand every solicitation, except the bribes held out were too tempting to be resisted, Mrs. Wellsdown having said every thing likely to comfort the really penitent Emily, advised their immediately leaving the house; and as the baggage was ready, attended only by the faithful Armiger, lady Exmore followed her relative into the chaise in waiting, which had driven from the door before Mrs. Harland had recovered from the surprise her unexpected departure, and in such company, had occasioned her; but as she construed her not having taken the slightest notice of her into

into absolute defiance, she hastily finished her furious epistle to lord Exmore, which she had purposely so worded, that it might be produced in evidence against the wretched dupe of her arts; and having dispatched this precious scrawl express to London, whither the viscount was just returned, she sat down more quietly to congratulate her *cousin Marcus* upon the success of their well-laid schemes, taking due merit to herself for her base treachery towards the friend of her childhood, and modestly hinting, that she could hardly be sufficiently rewarded for the obloquy she must endure for his sake; this she sent off by the same evening's post, therefore they arrived nearly together. Her first letter was much more welcome than her second, which he immediately consigned to the flames; but resolving to enact the injured husband with proper eclat, he hastily summoned Augustus, who was really shocked at the description his Machiavelian wife had given of his sister's turpitude,

turpitude, who, she declared, had purposely thrown herself in captain Murray's way, in spite of all her remonstrances; and, when she found that she, Mrs. Harland, was resolved no longer to suffer his visits, under any pretence, she wound up her romance by dishonouring her husband.

Augustus, who was not deficient in courage, talked of calling the captain out; but to this lord Exmore objected; he was a poor devil, beneath their notice, and really not so much to blame as lady Exmore; he should therefore have recourse to other arms to punish him, adding—"All I request of you, Mr. Harland, is, not to interfere in this business; should your wretched sister address you, return her letters unanswered. Remember, you must either give her up, or me—you cannot be the friend of both."

The weak young man feeling convinced that his sister was lost to all sense of shame, readily gave his promise to hold no intercourse with so abandoned a wanton; this obtained, lord Exmore set out for

South-

Southampton, to see his accomplice, and to question the other witnesses of his disgrace. He had also resolved, upon second thoughts, to call captain Murray out, having a second in view who would, he knew, render the duel perfectly harmless. This gentleman, who looked up to lord Exmore as his present and future patron, accompanied him to Southampton; and while his lordship was listening to Mrs. Harland's tale, and hearing the depositions of the bribed witnesses, he conveyed a very properly worded challenge to captain Murray. But not to dwell upon this farce, the peace officers, being properly instructed, put an effectual stop to the proposed duel; and finally the injured husband, as he was now styled by all who had heard of the circumstance, having given up the house, and settled every pecuniary demand upon his wretched wife, returned to London that same evening with the now-triumphant Jane Harland, to whom he dictated what conduct to pursue, as the most

likely to convince the world that she was the sincere but deceived friend of the wretched Emily, and that he was the most injured of men.

The earl of Delmont was at his seat in the north; to him and his mother the viscount wrote a most excellent and really moving picture of his distress, considering himself as basely dishonoured by a former lover of his wanton wife, and deeply regretting he had ever formed so unequal and degrading a connexion. His next step was to seek the advice of the crown lawyers, who assured him that the case was so clear they could ensure him a speedy release from his now-galling chains; still Marcus hardly felt satisfied [illegible] w[illegible]nd that he must [illegible]d, as he no[illegible] foun[illegible] return every stiver he had received with his ill-fated wife, except the money which was actually settled upon the issue of their marriage, and that must remain in the hands of the original trustees, and she must, while she lived, receive the interest arisng from it;

a

as for the ten thousand pounds which Mr. Harland had bestowed upon the young Marcus on the day of his christening, that was the only property he now found he should be still able to retain; therefore his, we may say dear-bought, triumph over the victim of his arts, was far from complete; still, when once at liberty to make another choice, he conceived his prospects would be most brilliant, could he, as he hoped and expected, obtain the hand, and with it, what he valued much more, the large possessions of the countess of Abberville; and of his doing so, lady Delmont had so little doubt, that in answer to his letter, detailing the recent events, she wrote him, that much as she grieved at the disgrace which had befallen the family, she hoped he would be made rich amends, should he, as she hoped and expected, become the husband of lady Abberville.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

The fashionable world, though dispersed at watering-places and at their country seats, were fully employed in discussing the shameful conduct of lady Exmore, whose lord was so generally admired, and so much looked up to for his very superior talents, that she was considered as the most depraved of women, even by her own sex, and still more severely condemned by the other.—" Captain Murray must be a practised seducer; still he was not near so much to blame as lady Exmore," who, very wisely, confined herself wholly to Mrs. Wellsdown's house and small demesne while the suit was pending; and, at the suggestion, nay, almost by the command of his maternal uncle, sir Charles Freeman, captain Murray spent the

the chief of his time under his roof, as this worthy man, though not sparing of his reproaches in the first instance, was soon thoroughly reconciled to his truly-deserving nephew; but, as he told him, during their recent meeting at Bath, he soon despaired of bringing the world in general to judge him with equal lenity, since lord Exmore had laid his plans too securely to enable the captain's friends to turn the tables upon him. To Mr. Edward Harland Mrs. Wellsdown had stated facts, not attempting to excuse Emily, merely declaring she made no doubt of her having been purposely led into temptation, and passing some very severe strictures upon the conduct of Mrs. Harland; nor did she spare Augustus, whose weakness of intellect and foolish conduct had long rendered him the tool of the designing Marcus, who had played his part so admirably, that he had risen in the public estimation, in the same proportion as his unfortunate wife had fallen under general censure.

Edward Harland immediately answered this excellent woman's letter, declaring himself much obliged by her maternal behaviour towards his beloved sister, for whose conduct he found many excuses, desiring she would keep up her spirits, and recommending the mode of defence he wished her to adopt in the pending suit, and assuring her that he should ever remain her stanch friend, admitting, as he made no doubt, that her future conduct would be strictly correct.

To Augustus he was by no means so indulgent, as, in answer to a most violent philippic against poor Emily, which had been dictated by her savage husband, he merely informed him, that henceforth he should consider him as an alien to his blood, since, instead of endeavouring to protect his only sister from the tyranny of her unprincipled husband, he and his scheming wife had entered into a league to render her more miserable, by inducing her to forget that she was a wife and a mother

mother. To lord Exmore they must look for the reward of what he considered as very unprincipled conduct; nay, he did not scruple to aver, that Mrs. Harland had displayed both duplicity and treachery in her behaviour towards his sister.

This severe reply occasioned a most serious quarrel between Augustus and his plotting wife; nor was lord Exmore much better pleased, since they were now, by his own mistaken policy, become wholly dependent upon him, should they require any further assistance. He now blamed his trusty confident for having suffered her silly husband to take part against his sister.

She retorted so severely, that his lordship, who depended chiefly upon her evidence to criminate his wife, was obliged to acknowledge he had been too hasty, and finally to make his peace, by a handsome present. Suffice it to say, that, thanks to Mrs. Harland, and the bribed servants, he obtained five thousand pounds

 damages,

damages, the half of what he had demanded; but, as the money was immediately paid him, and he knew he was generally admired for his apparent lenity towards his erring wife, he pocketed the affront, merely to cousin Jane cursing the officiousness of Edward Harland, to whose interference he placed captain Murray's having escaped so easily.

A divorce, of course, followed, and the suffering and truly penitent Emily was no sooner at liberty to make another choice, than she accompanied captain Murray to the altar, with the full approbation of her brother Edward and Mrs. Wellsdown; nor did sir Charles Freeman object to his nephew's doing an amiable woman justice, who had, he said, many excuses for having erred; he therefore invited the new-married couple to his seat, where he did all in his power to reconcile Mrs. Murray to the consequences of her imprudence; but she seemed so averse to mixing with the world, and to feel so severely

severely the obloquy lord Exmore's admiring friends had attached to her character, that, to oblige her, with his uncle's free consent, the captain exchanged with an officer of the same rank into a regiment under orders for India; and most willingly did the still-lovely Emily prepare to bid adieu, perhaps for ever, to her native land; her son was the only tie that still bound her to England—she had not been permitted to see him since her departure from Southampton; nor had Mrs. Wellsdown been more fortunate in her application to Mrs. Monkwell, who, having imbibed all the prejudices which lord Exmore and Mrs. Harland had instilled into her mind against the mother of her charge, absolutely refused to let his mother see him, or to admit her even into the garden, though she did reluctantly suffer Mrs. Wellsdown to comfort his wretched mother with the assurance that he seemed doing very well; but now that she was going to such a distance, her wish

to see and take leave of this darling child greatly increased.

Sir Charles Freeman advised her applying directly to the viscount, who must be a barbarian to refuse so natural and simple a request.

She readily adopted his suggestion; but received her answer from the earl instead of his son, who positively refused to accede to her wishes, under the most frivolous plea.

The baronet swore both father and son were wholly devoid of feeling. The captain was still more angry; but, as they could not force them to accede to their wishes, the captain and Mrs. Murray proceeded immediately to Portsmouth, she having offered up the most fervent prayers for her son's health and welfare, whom she had recommended, in the most moving terms, to the notice of Mrs. Wellsdown, who had written her, about a month previous to her application to see him, that Mrs. Monkwell and her infant charge had

had been removed from the villa at Mortlake, to the neat habitation of the former, which was contiguous to the grounds annexed to that habitation, as the viscount thought it too expensive too keep up an establishment merely upon the child's account.

This appeared too reasonable to occasion Mrs. Murray any uneasiness; indeed, notwithstanding the nurse's prejudices against her, she rejoiced at the boy's continuing under her care, as she had a very high opinion of her judgment in the management of children.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lord Exmore had easily learned in what ship the captain and Mrs. Murray had taken their passage; and as he discovered, from the admiralty telegraph, when the —— Indiaman sailed from the Downs, with her dispatches on board, he was heard to say—"Thank God! the weather is fine, and the wind is fair; in a very short time they will have cleared the Channel;" when, to his great surprise, and apparently great grief, Mrs. Monkwell was waiting his return home, to report that the darling child, her sweet baby, had certainly been stolen from her door early that very morning; she had given him his breakfast, as usual, and having occasion to send her granddaughter into the village, had suffered the dear boy to run into the little green court before the house, as

as usual, while she washed up the tea-things, declaring she had seen him playing with some flowers, not five minutes before he was missing, when, on calling him in, he did not answer, and when she went to fetch him, he was nowhere to be seen, since when, till she had set out for London, she had sought him every where in vain. To her mind he had vanished; the gardener at the villa, his wife, and all the men employed about the grounds, had assisted in the search, besides many other people; but no one had been able to see or hear any thing of the dear boy; so, by their advice, she had come to London, to relate the strange event to his lordship.

The viscount appeared both enraged and confounded, declared nurse Monkwell was the most careless creature he had ever heard of, wondering how she dared to appear before him, and continued to rave (having sent for his father and Augustus, to assist him with their advice) till they

arrived,

arrived, when the weeping nurse, after repeating her strange story, begged pardon for saying so, but, God forgive her, if she did not suspect madam Murray of having stolen the child! it was unknown the bribes she had offered her to allow her to see him; and the sweet boy would have screamed had a stranger seized him.

"Oh, it is a clear case," cried the earl. "Yes, yes, in revenge for our refusing to admit her to see the child, she has stolen him. Send off an express to Landsend, Marcus; we may yet defeat her purpose."

"I shall not take the trouble, sir; she has only confirmed many vague suspicions that have for some time floated in my mind respecting my relationship to the stolen child. That she is the thief, does not, cannot admit a doubt. Unintentionally she has done me a service, as she may not find it so easy to reinstate *her son* in the rights he has forfeited, by her wicked plan having succeeded."

Augustus

Augustus ventured to observe—"You entertained no doubt of the child's legitimacy when he was born."

"I was not so well aware of your sister's disposition and connexions, Mr. Harland; and you must be wilfully blind if this does not open your eyes to her guilt, as it has mine. I acquit you of all but very culpable negligence, Mrs. Monkwell; but you were no match for such a pair as captain and Mrs. Murray; so go home—you have my free permission to circulate your suspicions, as you may say, that were I not certain who had spirited the child away, I would move heaven and earth for its recovery."

Nurse departed, rather consoled; and as Mrs. Harland was not in town, Augustus remained with his noble brother, who brought him into his way of thinking before they separated.

The loss of the child was the general topic among the fashionable circles the following

following day, and, as might be supposed, his mother was suspected of being concerned in his disappearance; and lord Exmore's suspicions of its legitimacy were generally entertained, and all agreed he was a most injured man, and she a most abandoned woman.

The earl of Delmont, though often the dupe of his once-beloved Marcus, did not believe the boy was captain Murray's; besides, as he told his son, as he was born in wedlock, and had been so noticed by his grandfather, he could not dispossess him of his birthright, though his foolish and frail mother had contrived to remove him.—"No, no, and of that the jade was aware; he was *bona fide* heir to the family honours and estates."

Lord Exmore merely dared Mrs. Murray to produce him, with such a view, after thus removing him, contrary to his express and known will, and in defiance of the laws of her country. He would

convince

convince her and the captain they should not a third time dupe him, though they had done so twice.

In vain did sir Charles Freeman declare his nephew and niece proceeded directly from his seat to Portsmouth, pledging his honour to prove their innocence of the base charge brought against them.

Mrs. Wellsdown was equally anxious to exonerate them, producing Mrs. Murray's last letter, recommending her son in the strongest terms to her notice. They were not even attended to—lord Exmore had so much more in his power, that his dependents peremptorily silenced every one who ventured to raise their voice in defence of the absentees.

Mrs. Harland was among the loudest of their accusers, and her half shrugs, and clever inuendos, did wonders in lord Exmore's behalf when fortune seemed inclined to play him false. He was entertaining a large party of gentlemen, who had

had not left the dining-room, when lieutenant Murray was announced.

The name induced most of the company to exchange glances, while Marcus exclaimed—"I will wait upon the gentleman in a few minutes."

Possibly not being gifted with much patience, the unexpected guest did not choose to wait his leisure, since, pushing past the servant, he exclaimed—"As my business is not of a private nature, I will not trouble your lordship to leave the room and this good company; my name you have already heard, and I now tell you, that I am brother to captain Murray, who sailed last week for Bengal, therefore he cannot refute the pretty story in circulation respecting him; but I have been told that you accuse him, in conjunction with his wife, of having kidnapped your son and heir; be so obliging as to inform me whether I have not been imposed upon, that I may, as he is absent, plead in his defence."

Never

Never had lord Exmore been more taken by surprise; still, under the appearance of the most calm composure, and the most ineffable contempt, he replied—"I am perfectly at a loss to understand you, not having any acquaintance with captain Murray; his having brothers can no way concern me; you may be related to him, or you may be an impostor, who has, under an idle pretence, forced yourself into my presence; at all events, we can have nothing to discuss together. Turner, open the door for this gentleman!"

"That is very well said, my lord, and very well turned off; but I will not leave this house, nor your presence, till you have answered my question. I may be acting unpolitely, and very likely illegally, but that is of little moment; I therefore repeat my question—dare you affirm, lord Exmore, that my brother and Mrs. Murray have taken your son with them to India? because, if you do assert such an untruth, I will tell you to your teeth you lie!"

The

The consternation of the company was now extreme. Lord Exmore, as we have already related, was by no means courageous; and this insolent intruder made him wish himself any where but face to face with such a bully; at last he faltered out, as no one else chose to interfere, though intense curiosity was depicted upon every countenance—"I have merely judged captain and Mrs. Murray, sir, upon very strong circumstantial evidence—my son has been removed from Mortlake in the most extraordinary manner, and upon whom but his mother and captain Murray could my suspicions fall? My father, Mr. Harland, his wife, nay, all my friends and connexions, coincide in my opinion, since who else would have felt any interest in the fate of a mere infant?"

"Now, my lord, you talk reason. I can only, in return, assure you and your friends, including Mrs. Harland, if you consider her as such, that you are all mistaken.

taken. I reached Portsmouth, having been in the West Indies for the last three years, only the day before my brother and his wife embarked for Bengal, and having obtained leave of absence, I accompanied them to Landsend, from whence I returned in the pilot's sloop, and was landed at Plymouth, and there I read a newspaper, which had arrived that morning, by which I found that my brother was not only suspected, but accused of having kidnapped your son. As to the late trial, his having fallen into one error is no reason why he should be guilty of a theft; and yet every newspaper teems with the same accusation against two people, 'more sinned against than sinning,' since, I will pledge my honour, that no child has accompanied them to India; and Mrs. Murray repeatedly declared, in my hearing, that she only regretted leaving her son behind her. I therefore expect that your lordship will contradict the scandalous reports now in

circulation,

circulation, since, I repeat, no child has accompanied those you accuse to India; and I will not suffer my brother's fame to be sullied by newspaper scribblers."

"Are you in the navy, lieutenant Murray?"

"I am, my lord, and as such I consider myself as a gentleman; my name now stands upon the books of the ——, forty-four gun frigate, in which I arrived at Portsmouth just in time to see my brother."

"Turner," cried his lordship, "bring me this month's Navy List."

"Do so, Mr. Turner," rejoined the young officer. "No man's word ought to be taken in these times;" and as all he had advanced proved to be gospel, the politic Marcus made proper apologies for the precaution he had taken, and requested the lieutenant would take a seat and a glass of wine.

"With all my heart, my lord, I never bea-

bear malice; and I hope you are now convinced that your son is not on his passage to India."

"I make no doubt he is still in England, since you say so."

"Avast there, my lord! I merely said the child was not sailing for India; whether he is in England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, I am perfectly ignorant; so allow me to drink your lordship's health," bowing to the rest of the company, and tossing off his glass.

This done, he took a polite leave, and left the house.

Lord Exmore had never been taken so unpleasantly by surprise, since, though he had got rid of the bold intruder, he had still to inform his guests why he had supposed Mrs. Murray had been concerned in the child's disappearance, and this was a most irksome task; but rallying his spirits, he, with every appearance of candour, entered into various details, merely tending to convince the company that his first conjecture

conjecture had probability for its basis, declaring he was now totally at a loss to guess what could have befallen the unfortunate infant; possibly his mother might have left it in England, else he should really dread it had been carried off by gipsies. The bare idea was truly horrible, since it might be dragged about the country in rags, to excite charity, and would probably soon be so disfigured as to render it impossible to recognise it.

No one present could afford him any comfort, though all agreed that, like him, they should, in the first instance, have suspected the mother. It was, however, agreed to mention lieutenant Murray's assertions, as such a step might prevent his farther interference, in what was properly a family concern.

Lord Delmont, when informed of the lieutenant's visit, maintained the child was in England, recommending his son to keep an eye upon Mrs. Wellsdown and sir Charles Freeman, as to nurse Monkwell,

well, money was all-powerful with such people; but as no fresh discoveries were made, and as dame Monkwell stuck to her first story, after a time the wonder ceased—nay, ere six months had elapsed, the circumstance was hardly remembered, and had ceased to be mentioned, even among the family.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEING now at full liberty to make a second choice, no sooner had the bustle respecting the disappearance of his son rather subsided, than lord Exmore became the avowed public admirer, and soon the declared lover of the rich and fashionable countess of Abberville; and as he had appeared to sigh in secret for her, even while the divorce was pending, he was soon convinced he had no reason to fear a refusal:

 indeed,

indeed, the elegance of his manners, his handsome person, and acknowledged talents, had long before made an impression upon this mere woman of the world, who considered it the *summum bonum* of human happiness to lead the fashion, and to feel herself an object of envy to the inferior satellites who shine with borrowed lustre in the gay world.

Never, perhaps, was there a woman more suited to the unprincipled but highly-gifted Marcus than lady Abberville; her vanity was really flattered by his well-turned speeches. Feeling she did not possess, as all her thoughts and ideas centred in self; she therefore readily entered into his prejudices respecting Mrs. Murray, whom she had hated, while his wife, for having engrossed the only man who had made her feel she did possess a heart; and as she was very credulous, she fully believed his representations respecting the child--who else would have thought of removing him? and with who else would

he

he have gone without screaming? and she as readily agreed that it was very probable he was the son of captain Murray; but then, self—dear self predominating, she inquired—"What would prove the result of his re-appearance, should it be in contemplation to bring him forward, at some future period, to claim the title and estates?"

He could not pretend to say what scheme the precious pair might have formed, but he hoped her ladyship would believe that they would find it rather a difficult matter to render him their dupe, since he had taken the first legal advice, and he understood that captain and Mrs. Murray, if they had removed the child, had laid themselves open to such a severe penalty, that he did not believe they would ever dare acknowledge their guilt; nay, after what lieutenant Murray had voluntarily declared, he did not see how they could venture to produce the boy; and if, which might be the case, he had

been spirited away by gipsies, he must ere this be so altered, that it would be impossible to prove his identity. He agreed it was a very unpleasant—nay, to him, distressing circumstance; still he would never now admit of the infant's claims to his title and estates, except indeed a miracle were worked in its favour; therefore, should they be blessed with a family, her son must and should be his heir.

Lady Abberville readily believed his assertions, and she put him in possession of her personal estates, which were very large, in return for a suitable addition to her already ample jointure of eight thousand a-year.

Behold him now the husband of this leader of fashion, rolling in money, and holding a very high situation in the ministry, since his speeches in the House obtained general applause: he had removed into the splendid habitation of his present wife, in Piccadilly, where her parties, and his dinners, were the theme of general

discourse;

discourse; their equipages were no less admired; and certainly never had either of them been so much objects of envy. But if there was not a *blue chamber* in their splendid mansion, there were times when Marcus was sorely annoyed by his trusty and well-beloved cousin Jane; he did not choose to render her independent, and this she sometimes severely resented; but as he had obtained a very lucrative situation for her husband, and had enabled her to take and furnish an excellent house at Knightsbridge, she continued his stanch friend, and had been introduced as a near and dear relative to the countess, who, nevertheless, did not seem to encourage any intimacy, as she bore an unfortunate name, her ladyship said, declaring that she had an intuitive dislike to that of Harland.

Now had lord Exmore seriously wished to promote an acquaintance between the ladies, he would have accomplished his purpose, since he sometimes shewed himself in his proper colours, even to the ele-

 gant

gant countess; but as he was more than ever anxious to appear an excellent husband, this seldom occurred, and he rather approved of her keeping *cousin Jane* at a distance, since it would not have added to his comfort to have known they were upon confidential terms, while he was thus blazing a star of the first magnitude in the circle of fashion.

The news of the child's disappearance, and the suspicions which had been entertained respecting themselves, reached captain and Mrs. Murray, whose astonishment and regret could only be equalled by the indignation they felt at being thus wrongfully accused. That the child had been purposely removed by its base father, to enable him to transfer its birthright to some other son, they both felt convinced, since Emily well remembered his repeated taunts respecting her origin, and his often having declared he could hardly forgive himself for having given the earl of Delmont the grandson of a broken merchant

merchant for his successor: yet to accuse him upon their own bare suspicions, which arose from their thorough knowledge of his disposition, and of his having a most able and wily confident, always ready to second or forward his iniquitous plans, was impossible; they therefore contented themselves by declaring their own innocence, and by entering into various details, all tending to convince the world that the child had not been removed by strangers—nay, the captain pledged himself to sift the matter to the bottom, declaring he was much more anxious to discover what had befallen the poor infant than lord Exmore appeared to be: but who would listen to the mere empty ravings of a simple captain of dragoons, while the man he stigmatized gave the most superb entertainments, and his countess the most splendid concerts? and their whole style of living and appearance raised them so far above the covert insinuations of this silly officer and his *frail rib*, that even sir

 Charles

Charles Freeman gave up their cause in despair, since Marcus was both considered, noticed—nay even looked up to by the ruling powers.

Mr. Edward Harland had equally vainly endeavoured to stem the torrent which bore down all the proofs of innocence captain and Mrs. Murray could produce; he had come to England upon hearing of the child's disappearance, and having first endeavoured to exculpate the captain and his sister, he finally waited upon lord Exmore. There he was completely foiled; the young statesman was much too wary for the upright merchant; to him his lordship declared himself almost broken-hearted respecting the unfortunate missing child, assuring his visitor, that he had so many engines at work, he made no doubt, after a time, of obtaining some clue which might lead to a discovery of its retreat—regretted that he had accused its mother of having made it the companion of her voyage, yet appealing to his visitor whether

ther his suspicions were not very natural: in short, if he did not remove Mr. Edward Harland's early and more recent prejudices against him, he induced him, while in his presence, to believe him innocent of having removed the child: but when again closeted with Mrs. Wellsdown, his suspicions all revived, and he agreed that this great orator was, he feared, a great villain; still, as he could bring no proofs against him, he returned to Russia, merely hoping time would lead to some discovery, which he might turn to his nephew's advantage. He had not seen either Augustus or his wife during his short stay in London, since he still felt very angry with the former, and detested the latter; he therefore wrote a brief account of his journey to India, promising to improve any circumstance which might occur, likely to throw any light upon this mysterious business.

CHAPTER XV.

During the ensuing twelve years the destiny of the younger Marcus continued shrouded in the same mystery; by his father's family he was perfectly forgotten, and so, probably, would have been his mother, had not Augustus and cousin Jane disagreeably reminded the viscount of his early marriage; but if his elder son was thus by him consigned to oblivion, he still lived in the heart of his mother.

Captain Murray had been most fortunate since his arrival in Hindostan; at the expiration of six years he became a colonel, and many fortuitous circumstances enabled him to make great additions to his fortune, in the most honourable manner. To the woman of his early choice he was the most kind and affectionate of husbands.

husbands. She had presented him with two children, who had, much to their joint regret, died during their infancy; these deprivations brought her long-lost Marcus more than ever to her recollection, whom, she now felt convinced, she should never see again, as she had felt assured, from the moment she learnt he was missing, that the hatred lord Exmore had long felt towards herself had also been extended to her innocent son, who might be wandering among the basest and most depraved of the human race; at all events, it was evidently determined to bring him up in ignorance of his family, rank, and expectations, since she understood lord Exmore's eldest son, by his present lady, was looked up to as his future heir. The bitter reflection that she had, by her weak frailty, paved the way for her son's degradation, if not his death (since it was impossible to guess to what lengths so systematic a villain as the specious viscount would proceed), seriously

preyed upon her mind, though she adored her present most indulgent husband, who was esteemed and beloved by all who knew him. Nor was she less regarded, since she was noticed and visited by every female of equal or superior rank in her vicinity; she therefore sometimes accused herself of not being sufficiently grateful towards the Giver of all good, for the mercies shewn her—then she would accuse herself of having been the occasion of colonel Murray leaving England, and his family and friends, merely to reconcile her to herself and the world; therefore, when she sometimes saw him suffering from fatigue, and visited by the maladies peculiar to the climate of India, she was completely miserable; nor could the kind and tender attentions of this much-beloved man quiet her conscience, or her fears for his health, till the dread which preyed upon her mind of his falling a sacrifice to the climate, had the most pernicious effect upon her own health, and rendered her unable

unable to bear up against a most violent bilious attack, which, as her medical attendants had feared and prognosticated, terminated her existence, during the eleventh year of her residence in Bengal. When aware of her approaching dissolution, she became most urgent with her sorrowing husband to induce his immediate return to Europe, since to him alone could she look up as the future protector of the lost Marcus, should his mysterious destiny be ever unveiled, and he alone was likely ever to discover his retreat. Her brother Edward was the best of men, but his residence in Russia, and his innate goodness, rendered him more lenient towards lord Exmore than he, colonel Murray, could feel: in short, she appeared so anxious respecting the long-lost Marcus, as she considered herself as the cause, and her conduct as the origin of all the evils which might have befallen him, that colonel Murray swore to sail for England as soon as he

he could settle his affairs, promising her to move heaven and earth to discover the child, whom he considered himself doubly bound to protect, since he was her son, and he had afforded his vile father an opportunity of discarding and depriving him of his birthright. His beloved Emily was therefore no sooner consigned to her mother earth, ere he made preparations for his return to Europe: while thus employed, he received the melancholy intelligence of his brother, once lieutenant now captain Murray's death; he had fallen gloriously while fighting the ship to the command of which he had been promoted, and had nominated the colonel his sole heir to no inconsiderable share of prize-money. This increase of fortune by no means consoled the colonel for his loss, nor did sir Charles Freeman, who communicated the mournful event, grieve less sincerely for the future admiral, as he always styled his younger nephew, hop-

ing

ing that the colonel would revisit England as soon as his military duty would suffer him to leave India.

In reply to this affectionate letter, the colonel informed the baronet of his approaching return, in consequence of his wife's death, and his earnest wish to make some discoveries respecting her son; this idea, as we have already seen, the baronet thought savoured of romance, and he was prepared to offer his advice upon the subject, which he did, as we have related in our first chapter; but before we return to the uncle and nephew, whom we left at table, we must, to bring our story down to the present time, say a few words respecting the Delmont family.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVI.

Soon after the visit lord Exmore received from Mr. Edward Harland, his countess presented him with a son, and, as he and all his friends declared, an heir. The child was christened with the splendour suitable to his rank in life, and to the style of living of his parents—a branch of the royal family gave him his name, and the newspapers of the day detailed at length the superb fete given at Abberville House upon the joyful occasion: and as lord Exmore now ranked among the immediate rulers of the nation, and was considered as one of the first orators in the House of Commons, who would have dared to suppose, much less to have asserted, that he had not been a most excellent, indulgent husband to his first *naughty* wife, a poor low-

low-born plebeian, and an excellent father to the boy she had so wickedly removed from his protection? who was, of course, the son of her present husband, at least so *whispered* Mrs. Harland, and many other dependents, as we cannot venture to assert that this pillar of the state—this highly-gifted mortal, who excited general envy, and was as generally admired, could boast of one friend, if we except *cousin Jane*, admitting, as lieutenant Murray once hinted to him, she deserved that name. Still he retained his popularity, and was considered as the paragon of husbands, as he suffered the countess to display herself at every fashionable party, and to astonish even the great world by her fetes. In private they seldom met, since marriage with them proved the grave of love; therefore, while this gay lady rather dreaded the man she now considered with perfect indifference, he held her talents and conversation in the most sovereign contempt, which, when he was thwarted by any of his colleagues,

colleagues, he generally made her feel very severely; still her rank and connexions induced him to wear, at least, the semblance of kindness towards her. The birth of a second son, after having borne him twin daughters, was the prelude to another magnificent entertainment; again was his vanity gratified by the rank and liberality of the sponsors; and as he felt assured that his boys would inherit his talents, he looked forward to their succeeding him in the ministry, and to his hearing himself hailed as the most fortunate of fathers. His girls, he presumed, would form the most splendid alliances, since nothing short in rank of royalty would content him. His children were therefore often his theme to his *friends*, as he styled his numerous acquaintance, and generally his boast, though few fathers saw less of their offspring; the nurseries, though splendidly appointed, he never visited; he therefore hardly knew the faces of his daughters. His eldest son, George, was, when

when in his sixth year, sometimes admitted when he took his breakfast with the countess, and was generally the occasion of his weak mother receiving a severe lecture, as the hopeful heir to such great honours was a rude, spoiled child, who turned savage upon his father's hands when he took him to task. A young, unbenificed clergyman had been engaged as his first instructor, and he bore the blame of all the young gentleman's faults; therefore, poverty alone, and the hope of a future provision, induced him to retain his irksome situation; but the appointment of domestic chaplain, and sometimes assistant secretary to the viscount, reconciled him to the spoiled boy and the unreasonable mother, and he was among the many who were completely deceived respecting the real character of his patron, whose mask was seldom or ever withdrawn but to his countess and the menials in his service. Whether he was really a happy man must remain in doubt; certainly Mrs.

Mrs. Harland was a sort of flapper, that prevented his conscience from being completely seared; to her he continued as kind and as generous as she had either hoped or expected; in fact, they were so completely in each other's power, that to quarrel must prove their mutual ruin, in the opinion of every one whose regard was worthy notice; else there were times, when the natural haughty temper of Marcus would display itself, particularly if *cousin Jane* touched upon certain forbidden subjects; but self-interest soon calmed his anger, and these *bruises* generally led to a stricter bond of amity between them.

Augustus was a dreadful thorn in the feet of both; having, owing to his quarrel with his brother, become a dead weight upon their hands, they had rendered his life so wretched, as he also accused himself of not having done his duty by his sister, that he took to drinking, which soon incapacitated him from attending to the

the mere routine of business which he was required to perform; he was, besides, very apt to prate in his cups, and, not unfrequently, to mention Mrs. Murray and her son in terms of pity, with other imprudent expressions respecting his wife, which induced her to request lord Exmore would remove him from London, averring he was over head and ears in debt; therefore he must be placed where he could not totally ruin her, nor oblige her so often to draw upon her kind cousin.

Marcus was not less anxious to place him at a distance, therefore proposed his taking up his abode at Eskdale, an ancient Welsh mansion, which was comprised in the countess's dower; there he might act as a sort of land steward; and as one half of those with whom he would associate would not understand him, and the other would pay no attention to his rhodomontade, there he would cease to annoy them; and a prison for life was the only alternative which was proposed to the sottish being;

being; he declared himself delighted with the kind offer; and could lord Exmore have also confined cousin Jane to this solitary residence, it would have contributed greatly to his comfort; but he was too wary to express a wish or a hope of the kind, feeling some relief from her proposing to accompany the wretch to Eskdale, that she might settle him in his new abode—"Particularly as," she added, "I shall, in future, divide my time between Wales and London."

"You will, I know, continue to act with your usual prudence," was the reply.

As their removal into Wales led to the house at Knightsbridge being given up, lord Exmore gave the countess to understand he wished her to give Mrs. Harland a general invitation to their house; but, to his surprise, she objected to the measure; and, without coming to an open rupture, he found he could not carry his point; and as he did not choose to inquire her ladyship's reasons for her positive denial

nial to admit Mrs. Harland as her inmate, his vanity placing it to the score of jealousy, he, with apparent good-humour, turned the matter off as a jest, and gave such excellent reasons to Mrs. Harland, to induce her to undergo a temporary banishment, that she remained near a twelvemonth in Wales and at Bath; and when she again visited London, it was *incognito*, having secured a private lodging at a stationer's in the vicinity of Bond-street, and where it was not likely the earl would be either known or noticed when he visited her, which he never meant to do by daylight, and there was a private door, which would afford him free egress at any hour. A lawsuit, she told her landlord, had brought her to town, and as she paid very handsomely, and gave no trouble, no more was required. Lord Exmore readily assumed the character of her solicitor, and, as such, sometimes visited her, and to her he always assumed the mask of friendship, since, while she lived, he

he knew they must continue united in the strictest bonds of intimacy; but though she thought herself as necessary as ever to his welfare, most fervently did he pray for her happy release, since, with her, would have died every secret he was so anxious to withhold from public notice.

Cousin Jane was not absolutely his dupe; and not much approving of shutting herself up in London, she spent most of her time at Gloucester, now and then visiting Eskdale, not to contribute to her husband's comforts, but to regulate his expenditure and display her power; once or twice in the year she came to town, to receive the reward of her past services, and to see and converse with lord Exmore, who, strange as it may appear, was very anxious to hear how his former wife went on; and as she frequently, through indirect means, picked up intelligence respecting her, they were both kind enough to regret she was, if report spoke truth, a very happy wife. The news of her death

was

was a great relief to them; and much about the same time, lord Delmont paid the debt of nature, and thus gave the ambitious Marcus the rank he required, as his lady now assumed that title; and their eldest son, who was in his eleventh year, was styled lord Exmore; his disposition had not improved as he grew up; his tutor had not been able to develop his talents, which frequently induced the earl to observe he only took after his mother; however, as the most likely means of rousing him from his stupid indolence, he resolved to send him to Eton, and to place him under the particular care of some of the masters attached to that seminary; and certainly, when his lordship carried his plan into execution, he did not forbid the learned gentlemen from having recourse to severity, should their pupil prove idle and inattentive.

A governess had been provided for the twin sisters, at a very early period; and a French lady had been lately engaged, to

assist in their education. The younger son was, at this period, in his seventh year; he had been a very delicate child from his infancy, and had not escaped the various complaints incidental to his age with impunity; indeed, so much had he been reduced by the hooping-cough, that it was much feared he would never be a healthy child, admitting he lived; his invalid state led to his being so indulged by his mother and nursery attendants, that he was, said the other members of the family, the most disagreeable being in existence; he particularly disliked the earl, who was the only person who ever ventured to correct him, and to whom he was a most serious annoyance, as continued ill-health had deprived him of every pretension to beauty; and if ever introduced before company, he generally contrived to torment every one present, till he was removed screaming with passion, by the earl's peremptory orders, who, when provoked beyond endurance by this unmanageable

ageable urchin, did reflect, with some bitterness, upon the lovely, playful cherub who had been so strangely lost, and who had evinced more signs of intelligence at eighteen months, than Adolphus did at eight years old; and as the countess was doatingly fond of her *idiot boy*, as his lordship termed him, he was the occasion of many bitter quarrels between them.

CHAPTER XVII.

HAVING brought down our story to the present moment, we will return to sir Charles Freeman and his nephew. During the time they were at table, the discourse was, as may be supposed, confined to general subjects; but no sooner were the servants withdrawn, than the baronet reverted to the subject they were discussing when they were summoned to din-

ner.

ner. The colonel, by his desire, recapitulated the rise and progress of his love for his late wife, not forgetting the early treachery of Mrs. Harland, which had first led to their separation; then to his Emily's unfortunate connexion with Marcus Mirvan; dwelling upon the many advantages which this formidable rival at that time possessed, in exculpation of his late wife's seeming inconsistency. He next reverted to Marcus's unmanly treatment of the deluded victim of his arts, giving her due credit for her forbearance, which had prevented her from exposing her husband to her father; and concluding by repeating, it was his firm opinion, that the present earl of Delmont had purposely secreted his son, by his former wife, possibly to induce lady Abberville to give him her hand, at all events to enable her sons to inherit his titles and estates.

"I am sure I cannot contradict you, my dear nephew, since I agree, I believe him to be a villain, and of the deepest die; but

but neither you nor I shall be able to unmask him—he is the idol of his party; therefore, even could we produce undeniable proofs of his turpitude, I much question whether we should be believed. You are, you say, in habits of correspondence with Mr. Edward Harland?"

"We are sworn friends, as I have already told you, though, strange to say, we have never met; but I have some hopes that he will, ere long, visit England; his last letter led to my forming such an expectation; and he, I am sure, will prove an able assistant in my *Quixotic* search, to use your expression."

"Well, well, we will not cavil about terms; I can only say, I wish you may succeed, since I think you could not inflict a greater punishment upon the unnatural father, than could you force him to acknowledge this boy as the heir to his titles and estates; but I fear me he will prove much too deep for you; and he has a most able auxiliary in that worthless

 Mrs.

Mrs. Harland, whose husband having, report says, completely ruined himself, and having been more than once kept out of a prison by his most *liberal, benevolent*, and *excellent brother-in-law*, is now his agent in Wales, and resides at some seat of the earl's, in the principality, which is also her ostensible home; but I have been assured she often shews off at Gloucester in great style; therefore she has made some reserve, or has some secret resources unknown to her husband."

"Who may place his ruin at her door; he was, unfortunately, brought up a gentleman, and having married this scion of nobility, was by her led into such extravagance, that no fortune could have admitted. Had my Emily really loved Mr. Mirvan, her eyes would have been much sooner opened respecting *cousin Jane*, whom, I firmly believe, removed the unfortunate child who I am so anxious to discover; and, I assure you, I think it very possible he is now concealed near her present

present Welch residence; not that I consider Augustus likely to have connived at her wickedness, but he has put himself so completely in the earl's power, I am confident he dare not betray any of her secrets."

"I dare say that woman is capable of any baseness; her conduct towards you and Mrs. Murray is proof positive; but, I repeat, can you hope or expect to be a match for her and the earl? Supposing the child to be alive, had he, as it was latterly given out, been stolen by gipsies, it would have proved a much easier task to have identified him; they would probably have affixed some mark, or could have brought some proof that might have been satisfactory, even to the earl; but if Mrs. Harland, in concert with that honourable gentleman, really spirited him away, I cannot conceive how you can hope to prove he is your Emily's son; supposing him like either of his parents, that plea would be of no avail in a court of justice."

"Agreed, uncle; I was making nearly the same remarks to my departed Emily, not long before she died, who then told me that she hoped her son bore a natural mark, which might enable me to recognise him, should Providence smile upon my search. When she was about six months gone with child of this boy, calling one morning upon a female friend, whose name and address she gave me, a tame bullfinch belonging to the lady, which she had often noticed, flew from the perch where he was sitting, and pitched upon her bosom; she was startled for the moment, but soon recovering, caressed her favourite as usual; nay, so little impression did the circumstance make upon her mind, that it had quite escaped her memory, till after her son was born, when she heard the accoucheur whisper the nurse—'The boy is marked.' The bullfinch instantly came across her, and upon mentioning the circumstance, both doctor and nurse declared that a mark resembling a bird

bird was in the bosom, which must be owing to her momentary alarm; and as Mrs. Harland, fortunately perhaps, was not present, at her request the doctor and nurse promised not to mention so trifling a blemish, which she wished should remain a secret. When the child was delivered to Mrs. Monkwell, she did mention the mark to her the first time she visited Mortlake, appearing to attach no consequence to what she compared to a bird; and, however willing, neither the earl nor Mrs. Harland could remove this proof of his identity."

"But they may dispute it, since Mrs. Murray chose to make a mystery of it; to you it might be proof positive, but you have those to deal with who will require something more."

"Positively, sir, were I but convinced of the boy's identity, I should be very ready to suffer the present lord Exmore to retain his honours; but Mr. Edward Harland is not inclined to be so lenient,

 as

as he is resolved to claim the money his father secured to his sister's son the day he was christened, except the earl can produce some proof of the child's existence."

"This demand neither can nor will tend to the discovery of the boy, since, I make no doubt, his lordship will bring himself off with eclat."

"We must take our chance. I am willing to hope for the best; some of the earl's inferior agents may fail him in the end, and I mean, as I have already told you, to send Martin to seek out some of them, as soon as I reach London, whither I must proceed to-morrow, as I have business to transact at the India House, which cannot be delayed."

"Then I can only hope you will return to me as soon as possible; and pray be very cautious, since remember you have no common characters to cope with. Your return to England, I feel convinced, will have put the earl and his supposed

accomplice

accomplice upon their guard, if, as we suspect, they were concerned in removing the child."

"Had my Emily lived to return, they might have taken the alarm; but it does not strike me that they will suppose me very anxious to discover a child to whom I must refund his mother's fortune, which is merely secured to me in case of her son's death."

"That may quiet their fears, if they judge you after their own hearts. Well, if it will increase your happiness, I wish you may succeed in your plans, which, after all, Charles, are those of an absolute Quixote; but as they are a proof of the excellence of your heart, I like you the better for having formed them."

The rest of the evening was spent in talking over past events, and in forming plans for the future; and so much was the baronet amused and interested, that they did not separate till a very late hour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

After breakfasting with the worthy baronet, colonel Murray, attended by his favourite valet, set out for London; and as the distance lengthened between them and Bath, the colonel grew more sanguine in his hopes of discovering this unfortunate child, since his uncle had thrown a great damp upon his expectations, by his close reasoning and unanswerable arguments. As he was not actuated by the spirit of revenge, he half resolved, should he obtain any clue, not to attack the earl, but to bring the boy up as his own; yet he much doubted Mr. Edward Harland's consenting to this plan, and certainly it would be doing his lordship a favour he little deserved at their hands. Leaving this, however, to future consideration, he now

now informed Martin of the plan he had in view, telling him that he wished him first to proceed to Mortlake, and then to Eskdale, pointing out the necessity of his observing the strictest secrecy and caution, since they had those to deal with who were not easy to deceive.

Martin hoped he had never given him reason to doubt his fidelity, since he must be a monster of ingratitude if he did not consider any secrets he might honour him by imparting sacred.

"I am well aware of your worth and discretion, my honest fellow, or I had not chosen you for my agent in this business, since, admitting lord Delmont may not be able to keep a watch or guard over his inferior agents, I make no doubt of Mrs. Harland often reminding them of the necessity of being faithful; indeed, so many years have elapsed since the child was removed from Mortlake, that, was the earl a man of less consequence, I should fear the circumstance was forgotten; in-

deed

deed I do not expect you will make any discoveries there, as I firmly believe the boy, if living, is in the neighbourhood of Eskdale."

"That seems the most probable conjecture, sir; but as you place such confidence in me, of which I am indeed very proud, may I take the liberty of reposing an equal confidence in you, as I wish you should have it in your power to punish me, should I ever be wicked enough to betray any secret you may intrust me with."

"You have certainly raised my curiosity, Martin; yet I have no wish to hold any power over you. I know you to be faithful, honest, and grateful; still, after what you have said, you had better be perfectly candid. I may assist you with my purse and my advice. You were led into some difficulties, you once told me, by a near relation."

"I spoke the truth, sir; for when my guardian angel induced you to notice me,

on

on board the —— Indiaman, a more wretched being could not exist, though I endeavoured to bear up against my misery. You took compassion on me, and I was no longer required to do my duty as a sailor; you have since kindly told me, that you thought I was born to better prospects than servitude, and you offered to place me in a native regiment; but I could not bear the idea of being separated from you—I should never have been so happy again as I was, and still am, as your confidential valet; believe me, your delicacy in not requiring a much greater insight into my early history than I was inclined to give you, has bound me to you for ever; and I will now relate every particular which led to my becoming an exile from England.

" My mother, and her only brother, were left orphans at too early an age to earn their own living; the few hundred pounds which had fallen to their share enabled a distant relation, who had been left their

their guardian, to place them both at decent schools. At sixteen my uncle was articled to a merchant in London; and nearly at the same time his most intimate friend was articled to an eminent solicitor at Chelmsford. These are trifling details, you may consider; but this latter was no sooner out of his time, than he married my mother, who was but just of age. I was the only fruit of this union. My uncle often visited us, and always boasted of the large salary he received, frequently expressing a wish that my father would remove to London. This he very wisely refused; he was in favour with his master, and hoped, in due time, to become his partner; and he would not go farther and fare worse, was his general reply. I was the boast and pride of both my parents—perhaps they were too indulgent to my foibles; but, at all events, they both took unremitting pains to bring me forward. I was early sent to an excellent grammar-school, and my father, who was a most capital

capital penman, devoted every evening some hours to my improvement; and I was, by very good judges, considered as perfect master of the art by the time I was thirteen; indeed, there were few hands which I could not perfectly imitate, when they were laid before me. I was not a little proud of this talent, which, alas! proved my ruin, and had nearly cost me my life.

"I had but just completed my fifteenth year, when my father, owing to a great press of business, and over fatigue, fell into a rapid decline, which terminated his existence in less than six months. My uncle, who was now a junior partner in the house where he had served his time, came down upon the melancholy occasion to condole with his sister, and to arrange some plan for her and my future maintenance. Suffice it to say, that he persuaded my mother to intrust him with our little all, which might have amounted to about two thousand pounds; and, by his

his advice, she removed to London, and he engaged me as a corresponding clerk to his own department in the firm. He treated me with the greatest kindness; but latterly he frequently made me copy various signatures upon blank sheets, to shew his friends, he told me, who did not believe that some of the writings could be imitated; thus with the most innocent intention, and solely at his instigation, did I commit forgeries to a very large amount, since he turned my unfortunate talent to his own account.

"Unconscious of having done any injury, you may suppose what my feelings were, when I was hastily summoned into a private apartment, where I found him in the greatest agitation, which he soon communicated to me, by putting a letter into my hand, which merely contained these words—'Prepare instantly for your own safety, and that of your unfortunate nephew; all is discovered, and in another hour warrants may be issued for your joint

joint apprehension;' and in a very few words this treacherous relative explained what I was even then unable to comprehend; and I found, to my horror, that a gallows awaited me, should I be apprehended.

"There was no time to be lost, and my wretched, and I hope penitent uncle, put notes to the amount of forty pounds into my hands, the tears streaming down his cheeks, and shoved me out of the room, faltering out—'Leave the kingdom, if possible, and without delay.' Running to my own room, I made up a small bundle, and instantly left the house by a private way. Whither to go I knew not; but having soon reached the Tower, I ran on board a boat that was clearing for Gravesend, and fancied myself out of immediate danger. When we were in motion, during our short voyage, I had time allowed me to arrange a hasty plan for the future. The instant I landed, I repaired to a slop-shop, and was soon completely

pletely metamorphosed into a sailor; and as there were some outward-bound Indiamen lying off the town, and I heard, by chance, men were wanting, I offered myself, to work my passage out. You are fully acquainted with all that befel me afterwards; but I must not omit, that while lying in the river, I contrived to purchase a newspaper, by which I learned the whole villanous transaction in which I had been so innocently implicated; and before we sailed, I read, in another paper, the death of my mother. My uncle's conduct to her and me was very severely commented upon, since I was considered as comparatively innocent, merely having been his tool, and he had not left my wretched parent sufficient to bury her. He had escaped to America, it was supposed, and had made me the companion of his flight.

"This report certainly ensured my present safety; and after I was received into your service, I soon regained my peace of mind;

mind; and having no ties in England, I should never have returned, but in your company. You are now fully acquainted with my melancholy story; and I dare say you are convinced that I have not attempted to impose upon you. My real name is Parnell; my uncle's was Metcalf; and I hope you will continue to think and to find me worthy of your confidence."

Colonel Murray was much gratified by this proof of his faithful Martin's regard, and assured him that he fully acquitted him of intentional guilt, adding—"I perfectly remember, your vile uncle absconded just as I was upon the point of leaving England; and you were even, by those unacquainted with particulars, much more pitied than blamed. Of course, you have never heard what became of your wretched relative?"

"I had been about three years under your roof, sir, when I read, in an English newspaper, that my uncle had been guilty of the same crime in America for which he

he was so near suffering in England, and had paid the penalty of his guilt. As to myself, I was so little either seen or known before I left England, and am besides so much altered, that I have not the least fear of being recognised, though, of course, I shall consider it prudent to continue to bear my assumed name."

"I do not think you have any thing to apprehend, or I would not suffer you to continue in Britain. I will endeavour to provide for you in a way more suitable to your talents and education."

"God in heaven bless you, sir! but the only favour I ask at your hands, is to allow me to retain my present situation about your person."

"While I live you shall, and when I die, I will render you independent of the world."

The colonel now entered into various details respecting Mrs. Monkwell, Mrs. Harland, and other supposed subordinate agents of the earl, mentioning where his

lordship

lordship resided in town, and the name of his principal seat in Yorkshire.

Martin made memorandums of all he said; and not to dwell upon mere minutia, set out upon his voyage of discovery the day after the colonel reached London, who desired him to join him again at Bath, where he proposed spending a short time with his uncle, previous to his visiting Bristol, where he had been advised, by his Indian medical man, to spend the summer.

CHAPTER XIX.

MARTIN, having divested himself of his usual gentlemanly apparel, first proceeded to Mortlake, and immediately went to the villa, which was now, he understood, the residence of the ladies Mirvan, their governesses, and suite; he boldly inquired for the gardener, Mr. Powell, whose name he had learned from his late mistress: being shewn to where he was at work, he saluted him as an old acquaintance.

Powell stared at his visitor, declaring he had no recollection of having ever seen him before.

" Why I lived with the late earl, and have often been here with my master, particularly about the time when there was such a bustle about his grandson being stolen from nurse, by the gipsies it was reported.

reported. Is Mrs. Monkwell still living?" he continued.

"No; she has been dead these four years. Ah, that was altogether a very strange business!"

As they were likely to be interrupted where they were, Martin, whom Powell fancied he now recollected, told him he was out of place, and had merely visited Mortlake in search of an old sweetheart, by whom he had a child, but that was dead, and she had married and left the place.—"So will you spend the evening with me at the Crown, where I mean to sleep, as I can very well afford to stand treat, since I am just returned from abroad, where my late master died, and he did not forget that I had been a faithful servant."

"You have been very fortunate," was the reply, promising to join him by six o'clock; when Martin very adroitly led to the subject uppermost in his mind.

"No news have ever been obtained of the child," said Powell; "but when Mrs. Monkwell

Monkwell was dying, my wife was with her, and she advised her making a clean breast, if she did know any thing respecting him, as she had often thrown out strange hints, and had never seemed quite easy or comfortable after he was missing. She seemed much struck by what my wife said; but, unfortunately, she was almost immediately seized with convulsions, therefore she merely uttered a few incoherent words, just before she died, of which no one present could make either head or tail, though she twice vehemently repeated the name of Harland; but no one present dared to acknowledge what their suspicions were; but I, for one, have no doubt but that madam Harland was a very treacherous person—she never gave any servant reason to speak in her praise. The earl was a mighty pleasant man, at times; and as he has now other children, I suppose he has forgotten the sweet baby whom I have often had in my arms, and who, I could affirm, was as like his lordship as if

if he had been spit out of his mouth; therefore I shall never believe that the boy was not his; and Mr. Barrett, the lawyer, once said in my hearing, that, as he was born in wedlock, the earl could not dispute his right to the title and entailed estates, should he ever come forward to claim them, as he believed he was with his mother in India."

Martin listened to this vague unsatisfactory account, from which he obtained no clue likely to assist him in his future researches, except that the general suspicion fell upon Mrs. Harland, as having been concerned in the child's disappearance; he therefore returned to London, but did not seek to see his master, to whose other servants it had been given out he was gone to see his relations, contenting himself with writing him a concise account of the very little knowledge he had gleaned from the gardener: and that very evening he set out in the Holyhead mail, which set him down, as he desired,

 within

within about three miles of Eskdale. His first inquiries were made at the inn where the mail changed horses. Mr. Harland was very well known there, as, when in health, he generally used the house; but he was too ill to leave home, the landlord told him; and he believed his wife was now with him—she ruled the roast, he understood, as Mr. Harland spent all the money he could procure in liquor, and when drunk, abused his wife, lord Delmont, and some others; generally concluding by declaring he would take his revenge when they least expected.

"Have they any family at Eskdale, as I have been told they are supposed to have a son?" said Martin.

"They may have one, or more," was the reply; "but none have ever appeared in Wales; and they may have reasons for not bringing them forward. Mrs. Harland spends much of her time at Gloucester; and when she is absent, her husband is seldom sober; indeed he has drank

himself

himself into the dropsy. Have you any business to transact with him?"

"I merely wished to ask him to recommend me to a situation," was the reply. "My father lived in his father's service, which might induce him to notice me."

"You can but make the trial; if madam is from home, and she spends very little time there, you may obtain an audience; but I do not think any recommendation of a man who is so completely shunned and despised will prove of any service to you."

Martin agreed to the justice of these remarks; but, as he was so near, he would endeavour to see him; proceeding to a small public-house in the immediate vicinity of the mansion the wretched Augustus inhabited, where he told a something similar story, to account for his wish to see Mr. Harland; and as Mrs. Harland was gone some distance to dinner, he easily obtained ad-

 mittance

mittance to her bloated dropsical husband, who was sitting with a bottle of spirits and a jug of water before him. Having been fully instructed by the deceased Emily, he introduced himself as the nephew of Mr. Charles Brown, once a clerk in his late father's counting-house, declaring that he was in search of employment, and should be most happy to assist Mr. Harland as secretary, clerk, or accountant.

Deadened as Augustus's intellects were, he was surprised at this unexpected claim upon his protection, asking Martin how he came to find him out, and what could have induced him to seek employment, so unlikely to be met with in such a remote situation, and to address himself to a perfect stranger.

Martin was not disconcerted; he now related, in confidence, that he had lately been caught out in smuggling a little Irish whiskey, which rendered it necessary he should keep out of the way for a short

short time; and having, by chance, heard his name, and knowing that he could procure any vouchers which might be required from his uncle, he had taken the liberty to wait upon him, since he did not consider him as a stranger, as he was even personally known to Mr. Edward Harland, to whom he should write, if he, Mr. Harland, did not choose to employ him.

"All you say may be very true; but were I inclined to accept your services, Mrs. Harland would soon turn you adrift; your connexion with my family would be no passport to her esteem. If you do write to my brother, tell him I am very ill; and should you be able to procure me some genuine whiskey, you may call again—but let it be when my wife is absent."

Martin promised to procure him some, if possible, and was obliged to depart no wiser than when he entered the castle, as it was termed; he returned to the little

country inn, where he took up his abode for the night; acknowledging to the landlord that he had failed in procuring either employment, or even recommendation, as Mr. Harland seemed quite under petticoat government.

"That I promise you he is; she is complete mistress. Talk of the devil—why there she goes in her pony chaise!" and certainly, while he was speaking, *cousin Jane* drove by; the lady she had gone to visit having been from home, she had returned much earlier than had been expected; and most sincerely did Martin rejoice that he had so well timed his visit; and all his inquiries respecting a child having proved of no avail, he set out early the next morning for Gloucester, having obtained a seat in a higler's cart, as he was as anxious to leave as he had been to visit Eskdale. From Gloucester he proceeded to the earl's northern seat, where he was equally unsuccessful in his inquiries, since he dared not put them in a direct form; and

and at the Delmont Arms he soon found it would have been little short of high treason to mention the earl, except in terms of praise; he therefore, at last, reluctantly turned his steps towards Bath, where the colonel had returned only the day before. He was not surprised at his not having been able to obtain any intelligence of the child; and sir Charles Freeman rather rejoiced at such a check having been given to his nephew's romantic projects, who, to his great joy, agreed not to take any further steps in the business till the arrival of Mr. Edward Harland in England; indeed, had the colonel been absolutely ruled by his uncle, he would have declined any farther interference in this certainly mysterious business; but all he could induce him to promise was, that he would merely act in concert with the brother of his lamented Emily.

CHAPTER XX.

As the summer was now advancing, the baronet declared his intention of proceeding to his seat in Hampshire, whither the colonel promised to follow him in the course of a month or six weeks; telling his uncle that he had been strongly recommended to spend some time at Clifton before he left India; and doctor A——, whom he had consulted in London, had given him the same advice.

The baronet could not start any objections, and would, had not business called him home, have accompanied him thither; as it was, he allowed him to proceed alone, but not till he had made him repeat his promise of visiting Hampshire, to plan improvements at the seat, which must, in

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the common course of nature, soon be his own—"Which," sir Charles added, "would be a much more rational occupation than seeking a needle in a pottle of hay;" and most truly relieved did our worthy colonel feel when they separated, much as he both loved and esteemed his uncle; but as he soon perceived that the old gentleman was half jealous of this unknown boy, and that he was fond of contradicting even those he most regarded—since he invariably condemned every action, nay, every thought, that did not originate in his own suggestion, and was, besides, wedded to the chess-board—the colonel cannot be blamed for rejoicing when he found himself in comparative liberty, and comfortably seated in an airy apartment at the York Hotel, Clifton. The first use he made of his emancipation, was to write a full account of all that had occurred since his arrival in England to Mr. Edward Harland; since, admitting that gentleman had left St. Petersburgh, his letters

would follow him to England, and whether or not, he derived satisfaction from committing his late and future plans to paper; and for the first week he found himself very comfortable; but at the expiration of that time, the house began to fill; and a large family, who had taken possession of the apartments adjoining his own, were so noisy, that they greatly incommoded our invalid colonel, who was averse to removing to a boarding-house, and had still greater objections to the private lodgings he had hitherto seen; telling Martin that, as a milk diet had been particularly recommended to him, he should like to remove further into the country, where he might enjoy it in greater perfection, and be also secure from the bustle and noise which so much oppressed his spirits. One footman, a groom, and a pair of saddle horses, were, including Martin, who was now often his companion, his whole suite; for these the valet was, if possible, to find accommodations;

tions; and as to know his master's wishes was a sufficient stimulus to induce him to attempt impossibilities, he told the colonel, the very evening he had mentioned his intention of removing, that he had seen apartments, in a very good but old-fashioned house at Westbury, within two miles of the Wells, which, he thought, would exactly suit him, requesting his master would ride and look at them in the morning; this he did, attended by Martin, instead of the groom. The appearance of the house, and its situation, met his approbation.

The farmer, who had been apprized of his intended visit, was upon the look-out, and instantly, hat in hand, addressed him, hoping the outside would tempt him to look at the rooms, which they (that is, his wife and himself) wished to see occupied by a single gentleman, as they had been plagued to death the year before with a family of children, who had tore the garden and fruit trees to pieces—"So, before you

you take the trouble to alight, I will tell your honour what accommodations our house can afford you: we have three spare beds, two master's and one servant's, and stabling for a dozen horses upon a pinch. Your honour is partial to a milk diet, your valet tells me, and is fond of new laid eggs; those you may enjoy in perfection, and have your milk warm from the cow. We make our own bread, and we grow the wheat, which I see ground, of which it is made; and, I assure you, sir, we do not take the advantages the people at the Wells do of strangers; we only charge the market price for what you may eat or drink, and your horses will be better fed for half the money they cost you at Clifton."

"You hold out so many temptations for an invalid, my friend," replied the colonel, as he alighted, "that I make no doubt of our coming to terms," entering the house with Martin.

The farmer's wife now came forward, hoping

hoping the colonel (she had learned his rank from Martin) would like the rooms; nothing should be wanting, on her part, to make him comfortable, leading the way into a large parlour, very handsomely furnished, the bow-window of which commanded a full view of the road, from which it was merely separated by a small court or garden, ornamented with pretty flower beds, and the glare of the sun was broken from the window by a luxurious honeysuckle on one side, and a jessamine-tree on the other; the best bedroom corresponded, in every respect, with the parlour; one adjoining was exactly suited for Martin, and the other servants appeared likely to be equally well accommodated; and as the farmer's wife undertook the cooking department, and promised to provide every requisite article of plate and linen, the bargain was immediately struck; and the next evening the colonel took possession of this truly quiet, rural retreat, where he found himself so comfortable, that

that he resolved to continue there during the summer: its vicinity to Clifton and Bristol enabled him to obtain books, &c. and every luxury for the table, which the farm-yard did not produce. The perfect quiet, added to the salubrious air he now enjoyed, soon produced the happiest effects upon his health; and as he daily grew more intimate with his landlord, the good man was anxious to render him as wise as himself. He was no great friend to many of the modern improvements in farming, and had no opinion of feeding beef and mutton merely for shew, and till it was so fat it was only fit to be eaten by the colliers in Kingswood, who could swallow and digest any thing short of a ploughshare.

Colonel Murray was generally amused by his remarks, and as he never appeared to be of a different opinion, farmer Abinger was not sparing of his own praises; and as he appeared a very industrious, well-intentioned, sober man, the colonel

gave

gave him credit for having adopted a very good method to increase his money, as he frequently repeated that he had begun the world with a mere trifle, and now, bless God! he had accumulated a very pretty property, and need not envy the lord of the manor. His two sons were at school at a distance, as he did not like to have them in the neighbourhood, where they would be always hankering after home.

The colonel was so passive a listener, that the farmer was never so happy as while, in his opinion, entertaining him; he therefore kindly related the histories of most of his neighbours, commending some and criticising others; and as the worthy yeoman was very good-tempered, and frequently made very shrewd remarks, our colonel found him a more amusing companion than he had anticipated, which led to his frequently riding or walking over his land; and as he certainly soon got rid of some of the unpleasant symptoms which he had brought with him to England,

England, he wrote his uncle frequent letters in praise of Westbury and his landlord, and was just concluding a very long one, when hearing a carriage advancing, he looked towards the road, being seated in the bow-window already mentioned; the first person who met his eyes was a farmer on horseback, whom he had seen the day before, when riding with his landlord, who was prevented from giving him this person's family story by the arrival of his wife's brother, who had come some way to spend the day with him.

Farmer Griffiths had, of course, heard a great deal of his neighbour's lodger, and had been told he was a very rich man, and having found him a very pleasant gentleman, he was now very respectfully taking off his hat, not seeing, or not minding a postchaise, which was within a few yards of him, the driver of which now called out—"Why don't you keep on your own side of the way when there is hardly room to pass?" slackening his pace while

while speaking. His remonstrance startled and confused the inattentive farmer, and alarmed the colonel for his safety, as his horse seemed very awkward and unruly: no accident however occurred; and the moment Griffiths had managed to steer clear of the carriage, a lady hastily put her head out of the chaise window, calling out—"Stop! stop!"

"Somebody to visit me," thought the surprised colonel—"who can it be?"

She had, in her haste, forced her bonnet back, and he fancied her features were not unknown to him; she did not, however, turn her eyes towards his habitation, merely desiring the postilion to call back that man on horseback, which induced the colonel, not to appear rude, to draw back at the moment.

Farmer Griffiths returned, hat in hand, and no sooner did he recognise the person who had hailed him, than he exclaimed—"Lord have mercy upon me, if it is not you, madam Harland!"

The

The name electrified the now eagerly attentive colonel, who having caught a second glance of the lady's face, felt convinced that she was indeed his early confident, and the once bosom friend of his Emily, who had, in the end, proved their greatest enemy. She was, like himself, very much altered; but he could not mistake her still brilliant eyes, had not the name convinced him of her identity. His first idea was to make himself known to her, but a moment's reflection led him to reject the notion, since that would certainly not enable him to make any discoveries respecting the object of his researches, as it would only put the worthless woman more upon her guard. What could have brought her to Westbury? possibly her visit might enable him to obtain some clue, which would, in the end, lead to the wished-for discovery; and as he felt convinced that he should not have recollected her, but for the circumstances attending this unexpected meeting, he was certain

tain she would not recognise him, though, were she to hear his name, she might remember when and where they had last met; he therefore again approached the window, and was in time to hear—"Why, Griffiths, you have not yet recovered from your late fright, or else, you are tipsy! I tell you again I am going to your house."

"Why I have been expecting to hear from you, or to see you, for these three months, madam, but you took me so by surprise, I hardly yet know whether I am asleep or awake; however, that is over now—I hope you have brought us good news, as I sent you some very bad, you know: indeed, I have hardly been myself for the last three months, what with one thing and another. Are you alone?"

"You really seem half-crazy, Griffiths! but this is no time or place to enter into explanations, so pray ride forward, and shew the postilion the way; he does not know your house."

"I was only going to Clifton, madam, to

to meet a man, to whom I have sold some oats; I shall be at home in less than an hour."

"I shall not detain you longer, so lead the way, as I have no time to spare, and you have both surprised and perplexed me."

Farmer Griffiths made no further objections, immediately riding forward, as she desired; and even before the chaise had got into motion, the colonel had rang his bell with unusual violence.

Martin was instantly at his elbow, surprise, not unmixed with fear, depicted upon his countenance.

"Did you see a postchaise stop in the road a few minutes since, which is now gone forward?"

"I cannot say I did, sir."

"Well, no matter, it is gone to farmer Griffiths's, and the lady in it is certainly the Mrs. Harland of whom you had a glimpse in Wales. Griffiths lives about two miles from hence, and at some distance

tance from the high road; hasten after her, and learn, if possible, whence she came, and where she is going, and what can have induced her to visit that man."

Martin required no further instructions; and not choosing to wait till a horse could be saddled, he set out in pursuit of the woman, for whom he had an intuitive hatred, knowing she had shortened the days of his lamented mistress, perhaps deprived her son of his inheritance, and greatly injured his beloved master.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARTIN knew where Griffiths lived, as a pleasant footpath led across the fields to his house, which had been pointed out to him by a villager, of whom he had asked whither the path would take him; he therefore took the nearest road to the end of a lane, which he knew was the only carriage-road to the dwelling, which stood upon the brow of a rather steep hill. He had made such speed, that he reached the gate leading into the lane a few minutes before the chaise; and as the hedges were both thick and high on either side, he placed himself in a convenient place to wait their arrival, endeavouring to form some scheme to obtain the desired information respecting Mrs. Harland's plans. While he was forming and rejecting various ideas,

ideas, the farmer, having alighted, opened the gate for the chaise to go through, but Mrs. Harland chose to alight, saying—"I am always afraid of your rough roads in a carriage, so I shall walk up the hill with you; while you, my lad, may return to yonder public-house, where you may put up your horses, as I shall remain some time where I am going, and can let you know when I mean to return."

Farmer Griffiths, who still seemed bewildered, flung the bridle over his horse's neck, and giving him a gentle stroke with his whip, desired him to go home, offering his arm to the lady to facilitate her progress.

Martin had found it necessary to extend himself under the hedge to avoid being seen, and was within a dozen yards of them, when the ever-impatient *cousin Jane* exclaimed.—"Now do, my good fellow, explain what you meant by telling me you had sent me bad news, and hoped I had brought you good; so do not keep

me in suspense," stopping under a large tree, which stood at no great distance from Martin's hiding-place, who had crept still farther into the hedge, and now laid so snug, that had Mrs. Harland's mind been less preoccupied, she would not have remarked his vicinity, though he obtained a sufficient view of her to recognise her for the lady he had seen at Eskdale.

Griffiths not replying instantly, she continued—"Have you lost the use of your tongue; or do not you understand my meaning? I repeat, I have never heard the bad news you allude to—what means did you take to forward the intelligence to me? Do not be so dead stupid, but tell me the worst at once."

The farmer, who was rather primed, was half sulky, and now returned, in a surly tone—"Why you would not try to make me believe you do not know where the boy is, or that he did not take French leave, as they say, by your orders? no, no, I am not such a fool, but I can see

as

as far into a milestone as those that peck it."

"The boy left you!" she screamed—"what can you mean? I am more and more perplexed! what do you suppose brought me to Westbury but to see William, and to settle with you, as usual, for his board and schooling?"

"Well, I cannot help your perplexity, madam, nor need you have come on purpose to make a fool of me; but, depend upon it, old birds are not to be caught with chaff."

The now thoroughly-provoked Mrs. Harland screamed, so great was her rage —"Fellow! how dare you trifle with me in this manner? me, who have been such a friend to you and yours? What would you have been but for me?"

"Hoighty, toighty! here is a coil and a to-do, because I am not your dupe! Don't shew me any of your fine lady airs, because it will not answer your purpose. I have kept your secret faithfully, and I

will not be abused for my pains. I wrote you a letter three months ago, after you had decoyed the boy away, as I supposed, and told you so, since who else would have interfered in his concerns? answer me that."

The farmer's display of spirit calmed the lady, who, with more composure, rejoined—"I never received the letter you mention, so God knows what mischief you may have done, as you must remember I desired you never to address me, except in case of the boy's death, or any very serious accident befalling him, and then I left you a copy of what you were to write, that, in case your letter fell into improper hands, no harm might accrue."

"Ay, ay, teach my grannum to suck eggs; I can spell and put together, fool as you think me, madam. I wrote you a very clear account of the boy's having left me; and as I mentioned no names, who was to know what I meant, besides yourself? I put the letter into the post myself,

so I am sure it went; but, perhaps, you did not give me a proper direction, or I might, I do not deny, make some blunder in the odd name you wrote down for me. Be that as it may, the long and the short of it is, that the boy has left Westbury, and as he had no money, and no friends, you have said, besides yourself, it was very natural I should suppose it was by your connivance."

Never had Mrs. Harland been so absolutely overset; subdued rage, dread of what might prove the consequence of the boy's elopement, and various other vexations, quite overcame her; bursting into tears, she sobbed aloud for a minute or two, till the farmer again roused all her angry passions by exclaiming—" It is very natural you should take on, if you really don't know where the boy is gone. My wife always said you were nearer akin to William than you chose to acknowledge; but, as I used to reply, that was no concern of ours."

 " How

"How dare your scandalous wife give utterance to such a surmise?"

"Now don't get upon your high ropes again—it is of no use; you are not the first, by thousands, who have had a child which they did not choose to own. I have kept your secret, I promise you, and made my wife hold her tongue also."

"You are a very low, impudent fellow! the boy is not mine, but I will make you produce him, or I will know the reason why."

"Then you or I must have dealings with the devil, madam; for I can take my oath I know no more where he has taken himself to than the babe unborn. I left no stone unturned to discover which road he went, but, to my thinking, he vanished; and if you are as ignorant as myself, why God above knows what has become of him."

"When did you write me this long letter you mention?"

"Three months ago."

"I

"I was not in Wales at the time, but that was no reason why your letter should not have reached me; therefore it is impossible to say into whose hands it has fallen; so pray let me hear every particular, as I was to blame to suffer any thing you could say to provoke me; when I have heard your story, and pray confine yourself to facts, I shall be better able to judge what plan to pursue."

"I shall tell you no lies, madam, so there was no need of the caution; you know pretty near as much as I can tell you, if I was to talk for an hour. The boy went off all of a sudden, no one could tell why or wherefore. I took a mort of pains to find where he was gone, and all to no purpose, therefore I made myself quite sure that you were at the bottom of the business, as you had given me a hint last time you came, that you had something in view for the youngster. I did not wish you should suppose you had deceived me, and so I wrote you, and if you were not in

in the plot, I am sure I cannot say who were; he must have had money, and found friends somewhere, as he was no fool, and would not have left Westbury, except he could have bettered himself."

"You talk like a fool! Who would encourage such a lad to leave his home, where he was amply provided for, except indeed he had reason to complain of your treatment? Your wife is a very violent woman!"

"She dared not behave ill to William, I give you my word: that he has had bad advisers is plain."

"And you have been very remiss, I am convinced, since he left you; he ought to have been advertised, and a large reward offered to any one who could give any intelligence of him, since he may have been murdered, or many misfortunes may have befallen him, and it would have been some satisfaction, even to know that he was dead."

"Well, now I do beg your pardon, madam,"

madam, for even suspecting he was your son, as no mother would feel satisfaction to know her son was dead. No, no, he is no child of yours; but do not provoke me, that is all, by blaming me for not having made more bustle when he was missing. Have you not told me scores of times, that his remaining with me solely depended upon my treating him as my nephew. A pretty thing to have advertised him indeed! why the whole village would have been up in arms. As to ill-treating him, I declare I loved him as well as if he had been my own—nay, I wish either of my sons were half as good. I do not believe he has met with any misfortune—no, no, he is either gone for a soldier or a sailor; perhaps my graceless son was his adviser, since he grew tired of work, and, in a drunken fit, enlisted for a soldier, at the very time William took himself off. I would have bought James off when he was sober, but he refused the offer, so let him bite upon the bridle, I

 say;

say; but they are not together, that I do know; and you owe me both money and thanks for my pains, instead of abuse."

"You must make allowances for the irritation your news occasioned me, Griffiths. I know you to be a very good man in the main, so we will proceed to your house, where we can talk this strange business over. I am really quite low and faint, and require something to raise my spirits."

"That you shall have; we have ale, brandy, and elder wine; so take hold of my arm, and let us be jogging; my dame will be waiting dinner."

As they now proceeded up the lane, Martin heard no more, nor did he choose to follow them to the farmer's, as he now hoped this plotting lady would not hear his master's name mentioned, since that might so far put her upon her guard, as to defeat his intentions respecting the child he was so anxious to discover, and whom he was now inclined to suspect

might

might be the boy who had eloped from farmer Griffiths's, who had certainly not made any bustle respecting his disappearance, as he had never heard the circumstance mentioned.

Not having formed any decided plan, he strolled towards the public-house to which the chaise had been ordered; the postilion was talking with the landlord, who was urging him to put his horses in the stable, as he had often before seen the lady he had brought, and she generally staid a couple of hours at farmer Griffiths's.—" I did suppose," he continued, " and so did many more, that she was connected with William Mansel, a fine lad, who was said to be related to the former; be that as it may, the boy has left them. Griffiths gave out he was, like his son, gone for a soldier, and so he may, and this madam may have other business with him; and, as I always say, we publicans should see, hear, and say nothing.—What did you please to want, sir?" turning to Martin—

"I think you must have read the name on that chaise twenty times since you have been standing there."

Martin was hardly conscious whither his eyes had wandered, so eagerly had he been listening to the landlord's half hints; but instantly facing about—"I was unwilling to interrupt you while speaking; when you are at liberty, I should be glad of a pint of your best ale—I have no wish to go into the house."

"As you please, sir—you shall have it immediately; that is a very comfortable shady bench—pray keep your hat on—you seem warm," entering the house in search of the liquor.

Being left with the postilion, who, having drawn his horses into the shade, had resolved not to unharness them, he said, not appearing to have overheard his conversation with the landlord—"You are from Bristol—I am going part of the way, and will give you a shilling for a cast."

"I

"I wish I could take your offer, sir, but I am waiting for a lady, who is gone to a house upon that hill."

"Oh! to farmer Griffiths's. I did not know he was ever visited by postchaise company."

The landlord, who was returning with the ale, joined in.—"Not often, sir, but there may be reasons for his being so favoured. If he had the care of a lady's son, why, I suppose he was paid accordingly, and hushmoney besides; not that I can bring proof of what I say, but thoughts are free, and I have mine. She thinks herself mighty snug and cautious, but I know she has a husband on the other side of the water," pointing towards the Welsh mountains. "A friend of mine saw her here last year, and he lives at Monmouth; he told me a thing or two; but as I say, least said is soonest mended, and I do not want to make mischief between husband and wife; what the eye do not see, you know—and the gentleman never accom-

accompanies her to Westbury; he may think himself in the right road to heaven, perhaps, but that don't concern me—I hate fending and proving, that only makes bad worse."

At that moment the landlord was hailed by a neighbour, with whom he was going in his chaise-cart to Bath; this broke off his discourse, just as he was in the humour to be very communicative, to Martin's great disappointment; he remained with the postilion, who readily consented to assist him in drinking his ale, but could not satisfy his curiosity respecting the lady, which Martin placed to the score of the landlord's hints and surmises. He had not lived more than two months at the White Hart, and had never seen her before; she had stopped at his master's door that morning in the Welsh mail, when she ordered a chaise, and came on to Westbury. To wait her return at the public-house did not seem likely to prove of any avail; he had ascertained,

beyond

beyond a doubt, that she had placed a boy under Griffiths's care, who had been produced to the world as his relative, and this youth had, as the farmer said, taken French leave, possibly by Mrs. Harland's connivance, though she had endeavoured to deceive the sturdy yeoman, and finally appeared to have succeeded. As her stay was very uncertain, and she would, at all events, proceed to the White Hart in Bristol, he resolved to hasten home to impart the intelligence he had obtained to the colonel, and to receive his orders and advice respecting his future proceedings, as he was more than ever anxious to evince his respect and attention to this, his kind benefactor.

CHAPTER XXII.

COLONEL Murray felt excessively anxious to learn what could have brought Mrs. Harland into Gloucestershire—what business could she have with Griffiths, who had appeared to him both ignorant and illiterate, when compared with his landlord? he was therefore pacing one of the home fields, which commanded a view of the high road, when he saw Martin approaching, with hasty strides; giving him the meeting—"Well, my good fellow, have you been able to discover what has led to Mrs. Harland visiting Griffiths?"

The valet succinctly related all he had overheard, and all he had learned from the landlord and postboy.

"I think you have obtained great information, as, like you, I strongly suspect this

this youth was my Emily's son; yet would lord Delmont, or rather dare he, to have brought him up in so shameful a manner? no, he cannot have been so very unfeeling. To be sure, he may have been imposed upon by this worthless woman, who may, as the farmer suspects, have privately removed him, to enable her to continue her deceptions—or he may be a son of her own; it is impossible to judge: possibly, if we could follow her steps, we might learn what has become of the boy."

"Leave her to me, sir; I will follow her wherever she goes, till I house her somewhere. I do not think the youth is related to her, since I believe she would have rejoiced had she learned he was no more. Should she return into Wales, you may let her go alone, as it would not be prudent that you should appear again at Eskdale, and the youth is certainly not there; but should she proceed either into the north or to town, you cannot do better than to follow her. Since the dowager

ager countess of Delmont's death, she has never visited the family, I heard in London; still I am inclined to believe (except she has ceased to minister to his pleasures, or to render herself useful) that she still retains her hold upon the earl: this I should like to ascertain; but remember, she is as artful as the tempter of mankind —should she suspect she is watched or followed, she will prove too many for you; she is never off her guard; and as she judges every one by her own standard, she is always prepared to repel any advances to intimacy in a stranger, for fear they should mean more than meets the eye. I speak feelingly, since knowing her to be all I have represented her—I was drawn into her toils."

At this moment they heard the rattle of a carriage.—"There she goes, by Jove!" cried Martin; "so do not expect me till you see or hear from me, sir."

"You cannot overtake her on foot."

Without attending to this remonstrance, Martin,

Martin, who was both active and an excellent runner, darted out of the field, took a footpath leading into the high road, and in less than ten minutes he had not only overtaken the chaise, but was seated behind it; nor did he alight till within sight of the White Hart, and was very near the chaise-door when *cousin Jane* alighted. The postilion recollected him, and smiled at his apparent curiosity.

"What is the clock?" she exclaimed; "and when will the coaches start for London?"

"In about half an hour," the waiter replied.

"I am very glad I am in time, as I do not like the mail—it gets into town so early, before any one is up. Can I have a place in your coach? else I know there are several more which start nearly together."

"We have only two inside booked," said the master; "both ladies."

"Very well, then set me down for a third;

third; and put something cold upon the table, since there is no time to cook any thing hot;" following the landlord into a private room.

Martin felt assured that she must have urgent business in London, to induce her to travel a second night; be that as it may, though he had no change of clothes, he resolved to accompany her; he had enough money in his pocket for any exigency; he therefore, having secured the fourth place in the coach, ran into a stationer's shop, and wrote three lines to his master, which he put into the post, and was, owing to this delay, but just in time to take his seat to the back of the horses, by the side of Mrs. Harland, who observed—"She preferred sitting backwards during a long journey."

Martin was a very good-looking man, in the prime of life; and as his education rendered him even a suitable companion to his master, and he was very well, though plainly dressed, he was addressed in turn by

by his three companions. The two elderly ladies who sat forwards were sisters, who resided in the Strand; their brother, a haberdasher, was to meet them where the coach stopped, in Piccadilly. Mrs. Harland was not so communicative; indeed, though she kept up the ball very gaily, she never dropped an expression respecting her family connexions, or residence; nor did she ever mention Wales, much less Westbury.

When the coach stopped at the Gloucester Coffee-house, Martin, having assisted the sisters to alight, who found a coach and their brother's shopman in waiting, asked Mrs. Harland whether she proceeded into the city?

"Oh no, I shall get into a coach here. I was not expected in town, or a servant would have given me the meeting."

"Allow me to procure you a hack, and to see your baggage placed in it."

"You are very obliging, sir, but I am an old traveller, therefore never incumber myself

myself with much baggage; and the porters at these places expect to be employed, therefore I request I may not detain you."

Martin mentally agreed that she was guarded at all points; he therefore coolly wished her a good morning, and turned to the coachman, while the guard assisted cousin Jane to alight; and as Martin purposely required change, he saw her assisted into a hack by the same person, who placed a small trunk and a bandbox on the front seat, while Mrs. Harland gave her orders to the coachman out of the front window.

"One would suppose, by her caution," thought Martin, "she was afraid of a bailiff, or a police officer." But having procured the silver, he followed the coach down Albemarle-street. As he had not said where he was going, should she see him, she might suppose their roads laid the same way, though he endeavoured to avoid her even forming that conjecture, keeping very much in the background, till

till she stopped at the stationer's already mentioned. The coachman rang a smart peel upon the knocker of the private door, and in a few seconds a man, whom he supposed to be the master of the house, and a female servant, were in the street, apparently welcoming her to town. She walked in, talking to the man, while the maid received the baggage and discharged the coach.

The door being shut—"Now what am I the wiser for having taken this journey? I have merely discovered that this cunning toad is a sometime resident here. Does she mean to make any stay in London, is the next consideration? and is she absolutely at home here? She may have merely stopped to avoid being traced, and will soon remove her quarters."

This suspicion induced him to linger near the spot, till he caught sight of her standing at the first-floor window, without her bonnet, and, to all appearance, quite at home.

Having

Having ascertained this point, he was undecided what course to pursue. His master wished to know whether she visited, or was visited by lord Delmont, and he was very anxious to procure him some intelligence.

Mrs. Harland had repeatedly complained of fatigue during the latter part of their journey; she would, therefore, no doubt, seek repose; and he thought he might as well do the same; returning for that purpose to the White Horse Cellar, where, having breakfasted, he secured a bed, to which he retired, desiring to be called at three; when, having eaten a mutton chop, he sallied forth, resolving again to reconnoitre the stationer's abode. The blinds of the drawing-room were down; he therefore supposed madam was sleeping on a sofa. To remain any time watching the door was impossible; he must return at dusk, when he might escape observation, and she was most likely either to go out or to receive visitors; he therefore

fore took a turn in the neighbourhood, and did not again visit the street till it was too dark to enable her to recognise him; and he was rejoiced to see the curtains down, and lights in the room.—“She probably expects company,” said he, as he mentally soliloquized, while pacing the pavement; and soon after the master of the shop sallied forth, apparently for the evening, merely leaving a great boy behind the counter. “Now is my time,” thought he. “I may venture to make a trifling purchase, which may enable me to glean some intelligence from that stupid-looking lad. Suppose Mrs. Harland should come down, which is very unlikely, I could frame some plausible excuse; and, at all events, her seeing me could do no harm.

“Those seem tolerable good pens in the window, my lad,” pointing to a bundle; “let me look at them.”

The boy handed them to him, and while examining them, and trying the

nibs—"Why surely," he continued, looking round him, "this is the very house at which the lady stopped with whom I came up from Bristol this morning?"

"Mrs. Harland, you mean; yes, sir, she lodges here, and has done for some years, before I was bound apprentice: she came to town this morning."

"She does not always live in London, I understood?"

"Oh no, her husband lives in Wales; and she has relations at Gloucester. I never saw Mr. Harland."

As there was more meant than met the ear by this remark, Martin replied—"What, I suppose he is a mere cipher in the concern, or his business confines him in Wales?"

"Madam does all the business in town, as she has a lawsuit that often brings her to London. My master supposes it must be a chancery suit, it has lasted so long. I dare say her lawyer will be here by-and-by. He never comes till after office hours;"

and

and again the boy grinned. "He is very much afraid of being seen; yet lawyers an't apt to be bashful."

"No, they are seldom troubled with that failing; but this gentleman may have a great deal of business, which may account for these evening visits, as she may perhaps object to calling at his office."

"No, I do not think she would like to be seen at his lordship's office; and this *lawyer* lives in one of the grandest houses in Piccadilly. They think people are blind, but I am up to every thing, only I must not set it about. My master wishes them to remain snug. He has a right to believe the lady's story; if she deceived him, the crime lies at her door."

"Your master is a prudent man. Of course you know his lordship's name?"

"Did not I tell you I am desired to hold my tongue? I understand trap better than that comes to, inquisitive sir! You

You know nothing at present. There are lords who are lawyers, nay, judges; but this I will tell you, as I believe you mean no harm, I did not say it was the lord chancellor," and again the boy laughed at his own wit, adding—"An you don't take me, I perceive?"

"No, nor really am I very curious, only you must allow you led to my asking a very natural question. Has the lady any family? she rather gave me to understand she had."

"I never heard of any children. None have ever made their appearance here. By Jove! that's the *lawyer's* ring! Did not you mind he rang twice, very gently? Madam always lets him in, so, if you have a mind to take a peep, do so."

Martin eagerly seized the opportunity thus afforded him, and had a glimpse of a very fine figure of a man, evidently in disguise, and made little doubt of its being earl Delmont. He was not detained many seconds

seconds at the door, and having seen it shut, he returned into the shop.

"Well, what think you of the *lawyer?*" asked the grinning boy.

"That he is a very fine-looking man. Will he make a long visit?"

"No, he seldom exceeds an hour; formerly he made longer visits, and came much oftener;" and as Martin could not obtain any further intelligence from the lad, he paid for his pens, and left the shop, remaining upon the watch for my lord, who made a very short visit, and was no sooner in the street, than he walked with a speed that almost prevented the valet from keeping sight of him, as he dared not approach too near, which enabled his lordship to make good his retreat up some private street, and thus to completely baffle his mortified pursuer, as Martin was doubtful whether he had not occasioned his lordship's haste; and as he could not frame any likely excuse for visiting Delmont

mont House, he returned to his inn, took a place in the earliest Bristol morning coach, and went to bed to recruit his jaded spirits.

END OF VOL. I.

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